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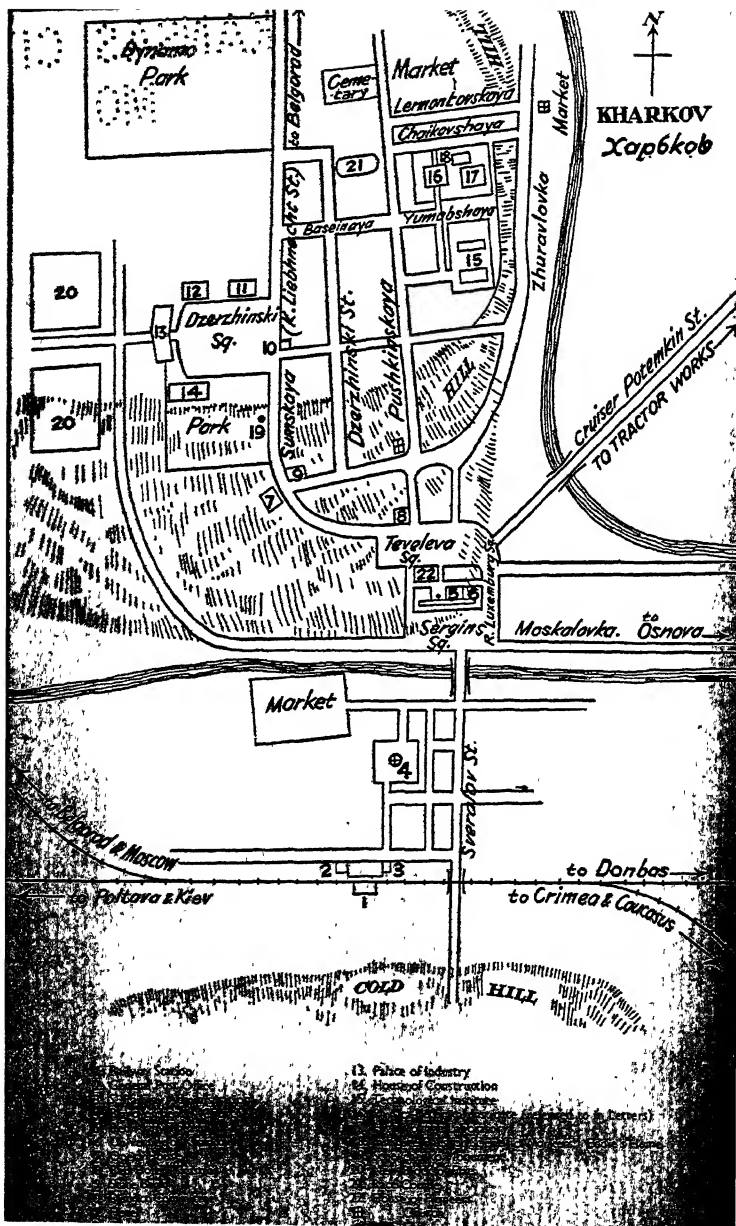








I MARRIED  
A RUSSIAN



# I MARRIED A RUSSIAN

*Letters from Kharkov*

*edited by*  
LUCIE STREET

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## THE STORY OF THE LETTERS

Cambridge to Kharkov is half the distance of Cambridge to Harvard or Yale, but in terms of adventure public opinion in nineteen-thirty regarded it as a journey to another world. When an English girl, the writer of these letters, announced her intention of accompanying her scientist husband back to his native land, there to live in Kharkov, her parents were more astonished and disturbed than if she had announced herself a member of the next Mount Everest Expedition. Nature has imposed certain barriers between Cambridge and Kharkov that have never divided Cambridge from the universities near New York. When winter descends upon the northern hemisphere, ice locks the Baltic Sea and bars the route by Leningrad to Kharkov. Ice, too, weighs heavily on the wings of aeroplanes. It follows that for many winter months the one safe route, to the city set between two tributaries of the Donetz, is by the railway that runs through Holland, Germany, Poland, and across the broad Ukrainian Steppes. The very names of these intervening countries accentuate the distance to an island people like the English, who think little of a barrier of three thousand miles of sea.

But the world of science, like the God of Love, will recognise no such barriers at any time. Cambridge University, with its cloistered riches of the mind and its centuried beauty of still stone, for all its intellectual life, is ever ready to become



the balcony of Juliet to the Romeo of youth. In 1930 it saw enacted the Anglo-Russian romance of "Kira" and "Eddie." For neither politics, parents, nor country could part this Romeo and Juliet once they met.

Cambridge University is a centre of world science, and the Soviet Government, long before they signed the Pact of Friendship with Great Britain, recognised it as such. They sent their best brains to study science at Cambridge because they intended to give science a scope and importance in the framework of Russian economic structure not imagined by any other nation before them. Agriculture and industry alike were to proceed according to the dictates of their scientists. Foreign scientists were invited to come and teach in Russia, on the most tempting terms. Their own best men were sent to study abroad. Professor Kapitza was already at Cambridge working with the late Lord Rutherford. That most friendly and courteous of great men agreed in 1928 to take into his research department the young man known in these pages as Kira—pronounced *Keerer*. Kira was a Doctor of Science. He had been a Communist as a schoolboy and at seventeen ran away from his Ukrainian home to work for the Bolsheviks. He believed in a new order. So long as the fighting lasted, Kira was hunted from place to place. Once he was flung from an express train into the deep snow. In the Ukrainian winter night he should have perished from exposure. Instead, his will-power kept him going. Somehow he survived and he found his way to Moscow. Hiding by day in damp cellars, always on the move, he continued his underground work. Two of his companions died from hunger and exposure. His own health was shattered. When the Revolution was over his original plan to train as a professional pianist was abandoned. Science and the University of Leningrad claimed him.

Before he left Russia in 1928 Kira had, in company with a group of Ukrainian scientists, persuaded the Soviet Government that it was a bad thing to have all the physical science

of the U.S.S.R. concentrated in Leningrad. The Government agreed to build and equip a Physical-Technical Institute for Applied Science in Kharkov, the new capital of the Ukraine. It was the beginning of the vast plan to establish scientific institutes throughout the whole of Russia.

At that time Russia was ill provided with the latest scientific equipment. Staff members of the projected institute, or college, were therefore sent to English or American universities, whose laboratories were fitted with the apparatus necessary for research on an important scale. Kira went to Cambridge, and it is significant that in his scanty luggage the most important items were the blue-prints of the new institute.

The charm and wit of the Russian visitors gave them a warm place in the affections of the people who knew them. They accepted all our comforts and luxuries without question, but they made most devastating comments on our lack of national planning and the low standard of our entertainments. When they congregated together the atmosphere was very like a Chekhov play, talk was the most important thing in life, and they talked and worked throughout the night. English sport and exercise never entered their programme; late rising was their only relaxation.

Kira fitted easily into the group which talked much of magnetic fields and low temperatures, of atoms and electrons, but the friendly English household in which he lived found him painfully shy. He was hardly ever known to converse at meals, and rushed away immediately after eating to do his calculations or play his piano. Yet his personal charm outweighed his shyness and Kira was popular wherever he went.

Four months before he was due to leave, Kira met Eddie. Her friends had given Eddie this boyish nickname because of her delightful frankness of thought and manner and the direct quality of her gaze as she talked to men and women alike. She was innocent of veiled glances or coquettish turns

of the head. Without any thought to attract, she won friends wherever she went by her almost impish good looks and her gaiety of manner.

Eddie had just finished a course of domestic science. Not, it must be admitted, because she particularly wished to study that subject, but because her parents had insisted that she study something. North Country folk of manufacturing stock do not approve of idleness, and Eddie belonged to a family whose fleet of barges moved regularly up and down the Mersey under the once famous Transporter Bridge. The smell of chemicals and the smoke of their manufacture, the clatter of horse-drawn lorries as they carried the green-glass carboys filled with acid, were all familiar to Eddie and her elder sister. As children they had loved those days when they left home and walked along the new road through the corn-fields, with their distant views of the Welsh mountains, till they reached the waste land and smoke-blackened town on Merseyside where workers went about in clogs and no one was ever idle.

Eddie was never idle either. But when the time came to leave school she did not want to follow her adored but much-teased elder sister through college and the law schools. Her parents agreed that dusty tomes of law were not her *forte*, and that she would never want to do social work in London as her sister proposed one day to do. But surely she would follow her own talent? When she picked up her violin, then nonsense ended. Eddie had a brilliant future in her grasp when the bow was between her thumb and fingers. Would she go to the Royal College of Music? Eddie was tempted. She considered the idea very seriously. Her father gave her a valuable violin, an old Italian. It delighted her. She played it regularly till the small hours of the morning. And finally she said, No. She loved her violin too much to make it her daily companion in drudgery. She might grow to hate it. She would flirt with it, not marry it, and she played a gay little

impromptu to her sister's pianoforte solo. Then she played a melody she had heard in Corsica and another one she had learned in Spain. But life was not to be flirted with like that, said her mother, at least she could study domestic science and learn to be an efficient wife should she ever settle down and be married. Eddie ruffled her sister's smooth hair with the point of her bow, holding it poised for a moment where the dark hair made a downward peak on the cream neck. Marriage, Eddie said, held no attractions for her, she preferred her sister, a parrot and cat. But she planned without her mother and the violin. Her mother sent her to a domestic science college. Cambridge and her violin did the rest.

It happened one week-end. Eddie's sister had come from London to Cambridge to stay with Eddie at the house of a friend. It was the house where Kira lived. Eddie's sister was interested in all things Russian, their art, their cinema, their music. At that luncheon, for the first time, Kira's conversation became animated. When he discovered that Eddie's sister was a pianist, among other things, he became enthusiastic. Would she have time during the week-end to play duets with him at the piano? It would be so enjoyable. Eddie's sister was immensely flattered, but suggested a far better alternative would be for him to play with Eddie. Kira was alert at once. There was a sister at Cambridge, a sister with a violin, and he had not met her? He *did* know her? He had never realised. . . . That evening Eddie and Kira played together for an hour after the other guests had left. The vibrant notes followed each other, soared, descended, rose together through the rich night, and already Love's candles burned bright.

Such a gay young English girl, with such an un-English gift of music. She mocked his seriousness while his wide-soaring mind overcame her almost before she knew it. A fortnight later Kira asked her to marry him and warned her against it, almost in the same breath. He said it was asking her to come and fight a hard battle in the moral equivalent

of war. If she came to Russia she would leave behind her all the comfort and abundance she had known. Instead of a country house in England, she might have one room, or at most two, in a crowded town in Russia. Until the first Five-Year Plan was ended he could only offer her starvation diet, cold, and uneasy shortage of all necessities she took for granted in her English home. But if she went with him, she would see the making of a new world and would live to see a social order such as her Christian religion hardly dreamed of.

Eddie never hesitated. Where Kira lived, she must live. Within three months they were married. They went with their friends Peter and Ania Kapitza to London one Saturday afternoon to the Soviet Consulate. A few moments after they had inquired about formalities they were married, with Kapitza and his wife as witnesses. They took the night train north to tell Eddie's parents.

The news of a Russian marriage caused consternation. An English service was arranged at once to prevent an easy divorce. So hallowed, the marriage could be recognised; but still with misgiving as to Eddie's future in "such a country." But Eddie was certain that she wanted just such a husband and such a country.

Arcos proved tiresome over permits and tickets. Kira's wife had always wondered how such an essentially gentle and lovable person as her husband had coped with a bloody revolution. One day, in a waiting-room at Bush House, she was electrified by hearing Kira, three rooms away, accusing all the staff of Arcos of being White Russians, traitors to the Soviet, and naming a thousand inefficiencies in a voice of thunder. So now she knew. The tickets were handed to him that very day. They sailed from the Port of London on the 13th of May, 1930.

Kira had small doubt as to Eddie's capacity to deal with Russia and the Russians. Their last night in London con-

vinced him he was right. A drunken taxi-driver gave them a scare by his dangerous driving. As the taxi drew up at the hotel Eddie burst out in a fury to give the man a piece of her mind. She refused to give him a tip and ended, "Now if you'll drive on I'll pick up the half-crown I dropped under your cab." The astonished man drove off. "You'll do," said Kira; "you might even get on a tramcar in Moscow."

As he predicted, she was a success in Russia. Her new relations liked her keen interest in everything Russian, and her valiant, amusing attempts to speak their language. They understood her feelings exactly. She became one of them the day she wanted nothing better than to sit in the main square of Leningrad on the steps of a monument and gaze at the Winter Palace. She was right when she said they seemed to like it.

What she did not like, and what no Russian liked any more than she did, was the cold and hunger and frequent penniless state, consequent upon the necessity of financing their Five-Year Plan. But though Eddie would stand in the snow in a kerosene queue for two hours until the cold wind made her feel sick, though the pain in her fingers was often excruciating when they began to unfreeze again, though she lived week after week without proper food, still she stood firmly by the Plan. When Kira could have got money to feed and warm her, she loyally backed him up in not doing so, believing that "money was a beastly thing to make a fuss about" and that they would not starve while they had potatoes to eat.

With people like these to support them, the State could indeed "scrape every kopek" as *Red Star* said, and the Plan was built upon a solid basis. Slowly they began to see the results of their sacrifices. Food was more plentiful, clothes began to appear in the shops. Household necessities followed. Only the bug remained to remind them of their former trials. As to the bug, Stalin said: "If Socialism does not conquer the bug, the bug will conquer Socialism." In this case Socialism

had a harder task in Russia than in England, for it not only had to educate the peasants in the matter of cleanliness and hygiene, it had to tackle at its source the breeding of the bug. In Russia a thousand miles of steppe will breed as many million bugs and the dust-storms carry them into the towns. But apart from bugs, Eddie's life became a pleasant one. Instead of being fully occupied with the task of keeping her scientist sufficiently nourished to be able to work, Eddie could go ski-ing and dancing in the winter, and in the summer out to bathing, tennis, dinner at Dinamo, concerts in the open. She became co-editor of an Anglo-German scientific magazine. She gave her doctor long English lessons, was social secretary to the Institute and official adviser on gardening to the Institute, went riding, and became a Voroshilov Cavalry woman and rode in the National Celebrations on the 7th of November. She succeeded in having two children when it had seemed she could have none, for Russian science plus her dogged English character achieved a miracle. In her comfortable home, with her devoted Russian maid and a doting Russian nursemaid, Eddie lived to see her husband's words come true and the Communist experiment justify itself.

Russia did not change Eddie. Her fine character was inherited from her English parents. But Russia developed and enriched her mind. From the gay chatterer who spits out sunflower seeds in the streets, and escapes the attentions of a cheeky soldier with a saucy waggle of the finger, she becomes, despite her professed indifference to politics, a woman of shrewd judgment and deep quality of thought. She read widely during the long hours Kira worked in his laboratory and she was left alone. The libraries in Kharkov provided the English classics she had not read in England. They provided also Russian classics and translations from the Chinese. To Kharkov came scientists from all over the world and Eddie's flat became a rendezvous for Cambridge scientists of international repute. Of all these things Eddie kept

her adored sister daily informed. Instead of keeping a diary, she posted regular letters to England. These letters talked to Eddie's sister as Eddie herself would have done had they been sharing a room together, as they had so often done by choice and preference.

As Russia educated Eddie her letters changed, till finally the personal note is almost muted by the international disharmony of Europe. But they never quite lose their Pepys-like quality. Perhaps because of it, her warnings were ignored by her family in England.

"I begin to think you in England are all asleep, or deaf, or blind. Nobody seems to realise what's going on in Europe, or what's going to be. For you and me it's not so tragic. We're still young enough to get through another war, without accidents of course, but Mother . . . Father . . ."

In November 1942, had it not been for the war, the Voroshilov Cavalry women, with Eddie in their midst, would have been riding through the streets of Kharkov to celebrate the Soviet people's pride in twenty-five years of cultural and material progress. Never before in the world's history had a great nation been created in twenty-five years. A miracle of Soviet brain, character, work, and organisation. But Kharkov streets were deep with rubble, the new buildings of that Soviet city smashed by the hateful evil German. Instead of flags hanging from Kharkov balconies that November 1942, the Germans hanged the men and women who had failed to flee the city. Corpses not flags. German foe not English friend. The will of Hitler, not the will of Stalin—then. But Russia fought till she amazed the world. Kharkov's streets rang again to the clatter of the Voroshilov Cavalry. Those balconies that still remained were cleansed of horror. The Russian atomic scientists could return to Kharkov and the Institute where Kira smashed the atom in 1932. Atom-smashing was not news in 1932 and so the event was hardly noticed outside Russia. The event seemed to be of no im-



portance save to Kira's wife and friends, the Russian press and a few fellow scientists of various nationalities. The repetition of Lord Rutherford's experiments by Lord Rutherford's Russian student in his Russian Scientific Institute in Kharkov was never featured in the English and American papers. Or, if it was, it has long been forgotten.

The final stages of British, Canadian, and American atomic research burst on an astonished world at Hiroshima. It ended the war but left in its place a great fear, a fear that it is hoped will be dispelled. England, America, Russia, earnestly desire the peace they sacrificed so much to win. All of them and each of them need to increase their friendship with the other. Science provided the earliest common ground of friendship based on joint work and mutual assistance. Each of the three nations need not one, but many million couples like Eddie and her Kira to knot fast the ties of friendship. And Eddie and her Kira now?

These letters tell the story.

Meanwhile *Red Star*, as *The Times* quoted it in November 1942, might be giving a résumé of Eddie's letters: "We worked for twenty-five years . . . not to be sold as slaves in the market-places of Köln and Königsberg, not for this did we create our homes, denying ourselves for long many things, or gathering every kopek so that millions of roubles could be spent on industry and farms. We did not do this that our achievements should be wasted and scattered to the wind."

Soviet achievements shall not be scattered to the wind. They cannot be if the spirit of this Anglo-Soviet marriage typifies in any way the spirit of our Anglo-Soviet Pact of Friendship. These letters, with nothing altered save some names of persons in them, are published in the hope that we may learn, with Eddie, to know the Soviet country that she holds so dear.

L.S.

## A NOTE ON THE AMERICAN EDITION

It is clear that these letters of Eddie, wife of Kira, were written with no thought that they might ever be published. They are in the casual manner of one who writes solely to warm the hearts of friends and dear ones. Their informality has been preserved, even to certain chance inconsistencies of expression, lest some of the essential charm and on-the-scene freshness of the letters be lost.

The Editor's connecting narrative has been altered but slightly and only for better understanding by the American reader. For the sake of clarity such matter has been enclosed in brackets throughout; the notes on the letters, with minor exceptions, have been placed at the end of the letter sections. In this way, a break in the continuity of the letters has been avoided. Reference symbols have been used where needed.



## LIST OF CHARACTERS

EDDIE . . . . .	Pseudonym of the writer of the letters; Eggu in Russian.
KIRA . . . . .	Pseudonym of her husband, affectionately called Kiwi.
GILLIAN . . . . .	Daughter to Kira and Eddie, called Jill.
MARINA . . . . .	Sister to Kira.
IGOR . . . . .	Husband to Marina, often called Garry.
FEYDYA . . . . .	Brother to Kira.
LUBA . . . . .	Wife to Feydya.
KOBEKO . . . . .	Friend to Kira.
YOFFEY . . . . .	Professor of Science who first organised the scientific work of the Soviet Union.
NIKOLAI . . . . .	Friend to Kira.
SIMEONOFF . . . . .	Scientist, friend to Kira.
NATASHA SIMEONOFF . . . . .	Wife to Simeonoff.
KAPITZA . . . . .	Professor Peter Kapitza, the Soviet's most famous scientist, for many years at Cambridge University. Awarded the Faraday Medal by British scientists.
ANIA KAPITZA . . . . .	Wife to Professor Kapitza.
BORIS . . . . .	Pseudonym of scientist friend to Kira.
MIRA BORISLEOVNA . . . . .	Pseudonym of second wife to Boris.
SASHA LIPUNSKY . . . . .	Distinguished scientist recalled from England by Stalin himself to do special work in U.S.S.R.
IVAN VASILITCH OBREIMOV . . . . .	Director of the Scientific Institute in Khar-kov.
NATASHA . . . . .	Servant to Eddie and Kira.
LEVI ROSENKEIVITCH . . . . .	Champion runner; taught Russian to Eddie, also ski-ing.
LYLLIA PROKOVNA . . . . .	First wife to Boris.
SHURA SHALNIKOFF . . . . .	Friend who buys motor bicycle from Kira.
DR HIMELNITSKY . . . . .	Doctor who attends Eddie.
DR KNABES . . . . .	Doctor who attends Kira.
PODOLSKY . . . . .	Professor of Science.
PETIA . . . . .	A scientist who brings his sister to visit Eddie and Kira.
GAMOV . . . . .	"Johnny" Gamov, a scientist friend.
DIMUS IVANENKO . . . . .	Scientist, friend to Gamov.
GRIGORI EFIMOVITCH . . . . .	Scientist.



# I

*Somewhere in the BALTIC*

*18th May 1930*

*We believe it is Sunday*

Darling,

Here we are once more in mid-ocean, nothing but water to be seen, just like the North Sea was until we came to the mouth of the Elbe, after that we kept close in to land all the way to the Kiel Canal. There, Germans sold us chocolates and cigarettes very cheaply. We got to the Canal about 6 P.M. and out of it at 4.30 A.M. so you can imagine its length.

*Later*

I have decided I shall not write a diary as I intended. Much better write to you.

Now we're passing the island of Gottland and it's some length, believe me. The sailors told us that when we got past the islands there'd only be another twenty-four hours to Leningrad, but we sighted Gottland at lunch-time and there still seems plenty to come and it's 6.30.

The journey's simply marvellous, a cat couldn't be seasick, the sea's been as smooth as this paper all the way. It's three days since we boarded this Soviet ship in the Thames

. . . it seems three weeks and I'm quite attached to our little cabin. Everybody on board is so matey, including the crew, and we all dance and sing together at nights.

Last night we had a wonderful bath. Kira couldn't make the water hot before, but having studied the machinery for two days, he managed a very successful bath. The crew didn't mind.

All the Americans, three Scotsmen and three Englishmen on this boat are going to work in the Tractorstroy factory at Stalingrad, some wives are with them, one man speaks Russian, but they don't seem very sympathetic to the "Soviet régime." One Bulgarian, very keen, is going to work with ninety-nine other men from the U.S. on twenty-five thousand acres the Russian Government have given them to farm. One Norwegian is going to visit her mother for one month; one Englishwoman going to visit her parents after fifteen years, for three months, one Russian woman going back for a short visit, and Kira and myself for life?

#### LENINGRAD.

We arrived in Leningrad feeling perfectly happy and Kira's sister, Marina, and her husband, Igor, met us with flowers, and all their friends came too, and did all the hard work getting the luggage off the boat and finding taxis for us and so on. We are staying with Marina and Igor. They are really nice and Marina is gentle like Kira and very like him to look at, only it's a little difficult for Marina and me, because she knows about as much English as I know Russian.

Yesterday Kira and I went to the Institute. I'd like to tell you about the Institute, it will rule our lives for the rest of time. As you know, the Institute in Russia corresponds to the Faculty of Science in an English University. I've told you about the great Professor Yoffey. In 1918 the Soviet Government asked him to plan a network of Research Institutes and Laboratories to cover the whole of the Soviet

Union. Some job. Yoffey started off with a staff of seventy, now he has two thousand scientists and technicians, and there are now Institutes at Kharkov, ours, and Sverdlovsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Tiflis, Tomsk and Samarkand, others too, of course. They have to do scientific work and research that is, or will be, directly connected with their own district. Hence Kira at Kharkov, because he works on crystals and atoms and things, and these are connected with the strength of metals, and there are to be great new factories at Kharkov and the rest of the Ukraine that will work in metals. Hence Kira says that Russia is the most exciting country in the world for a scientist to work in. For his research is waited for and followed up, in industry and everything else, instead of being ignored and not even paid for in many countries.

But to go back. Leningrad Institute is a long way out of Leningrad, about forty minutes on the tram, but when you get there it's wonderful, and after the East End of Leningrad, which doesn't strike me as any worse than the West End, it is heaven. All pine-trees, sun, blue sky and bits of the Institute dotted about, some bits older than others, all magnificent, but the newest part, which isn't quite finished, is absolutely the last word in architecture. I wish people in England could see it. They'd think again about the U.S.S.R. Mr Khariton told me the Institute was designed by the architect who built the Kharkov Institute and the Institute flats there. If so, I'm all for Kharkov, because it's very difficult to get rooms in Leningrad and the Institute flats here are not built yet. I wish I could describe everything to you, but I don't know how, my impressions of Leningrad will be like the streets of Leningrad, a stone here and there.

When we were arriving on the boat, the view up the Neva was most impressive. The Winter Palace in the distance, St Isaac's Cathedral beside the river just before it bends away with a glorious sweep to the left, the Customs House with magnificent steps to the water-edge, and so many others.\*



On both sides of the river, the buildings looked magnificent, wonderful entrances with porticoes, wide flights of steps, tall pillars, all the splendour you imagine Russia had, but really when you get near, and go along all the streets, they take on a most desolate garb. The plaster which may have been painted is worn and cracked, even the bricks show in some places. You find that what you thought was a wonderful and impressive building is nothing more than a communal house with hundreds of families living in it, washing hanging out of many windows; old and decrepit or young and untidy families hanging over balconies, sitting on the doorsteps, children playing in the courtyard. Utter and complete disillusion, and yet, poorly dressed as everyone is, the scene is so colourful that it's pure delight to be here and look on it.

Everything seems so original. Everything belongs to the people.

To-day Marina and I have been left alone, both of us armed with dictionaries, and both attempting to talk, and neither understanding, and me getting very fond of her; and we did understand towards the end. Now I'm waiting for Kira to come home so that I can launch a new sentence on him, meaning "I walked in the gardens to-day." It sounds like this: *Ya goulala v sadoo sevodnia*.

Everywhere you go, the streets and gardens are full of people all poorly dressed, and none of them in a hurry, except the man watering the street, and if you don't get out of his way he turns the hose on you! But the streets! As yet I haven't seen one decent street, and only one that pretended to be made. Dust, sand, stones, cobbles, water, just like Fairfield road before it was made. It amazes me when I think I'm walking the main streets of Leningrad. But I haven't been on the Nevsky Prospect yet. All the bridges are under repair after the winter. Kira says building bridges over rivers is one of Russia's most difficult problems. The rivers all

freeze solid for the winter and so smash the bridges, or else when the ice melts the floods are so enormous that things are swept away unless they are most carefully built. Roads too, do you think? So they have an orgy of repair work every spring.

Meanwhile I scratch like a puppy with fleas because Kira and I brought two little beasties off the boat with us. They've bitten me to death and it's so hot I don't know what to do. I shall be glad to get to Kharkov to get my summer clothes out of the trunks, we only have cases here.

But the Customs was an ordeal, they looked through every book, much less trunk, still they didn't hustle us.

Lord, there is a row below the windows, children make just the same noise in Russia when they cry, so do cats and dogs.

On Sunday, I think it will be Sunday, the twenty-fifth anyhow, people don't use the names of the days in Russia, we are going to the Opera in the morning. It's an opera I've never heard of, but Kira and Igor say that it is excellent music and the artist is as good as Chaliapin was in his youth.

Last night Kobeko, a friend of Kira's, called with his wife and Boris's wife. Kobeko is really funny, he tells me funny stories and tries to persuade us to stay in Leningrad, as everyone does. I met another friend of Kira's yesterday, and fell for them both utterly, Simeonoff and Natasha. They are great friends of the Kapitzas. Natasha talks English quite well but her husband can't say a word. He is good to look at, tall and dark and wears a real Russian coat with high collar and long sleeves, white with a belt, and a sweet little cap like they wear in Turkestan.

I shall write again soon I hope. Kira thinks we may go to Kharkov on Monday, but he's been at the Institute all day and may have been persuaded to stay here.

With love from us both. I couldn't post this for six days

because we were on the sea. Last night we went out to supper at 11 P.M. I talked French till morning.

As ever, EDDIE.

\* [These buildings, together with the Institute, are now gone, destroyed by the Germans according to the news from Leningrad on the 28th of June 1943 as reported in the *Daily Telegraph*:

"Leningrad a monument to Vandalism . . . to south-east of city where country is studded with famous palaces and museums, every building has been levelled.

"At least half of Leningrad's public buildings have been damaged. Germans directed bombing against the Academy of Arts, Academy of Science, Anthropological Museum, the Winter Palace, the Hermitage, the Shipbuilding Institute, the Palace of Labour, St Isaac's Cathedral, the Engineers' Palace, the October 25 Hospital, the Leningrad University.

"The outer fringe of the city is almost entirely wiped out. As one moves inwards the damage becomes progressively less."]

## 2

LENINGRAD 21

ULITA KRASNIH ZOR 57

(*pronounced Oolitzza Krasny Zor 57*)

K.V. 24

28th May 1930

Darling M.,

After I had been with Kira to the Institute, Marina and I were left alone for two days. In the evenings people came, including Kobeko, who is a really jolly soul, with a wife with

a loud voice which I fear you would find "common." He tells one funny stories in the sweetest English and a most snobbish pronunciation of "O." Mrs Mary, the English teacher in Leningrad, cannot understand where he got it from.

Then there's a man whose name I simply couldn't spell, Shalnikoff or something like it, everyone calls him "this little man," he's nice but cannot speak English. Kira and he seem very fond of one another. Then of course there's Boris. He speaks excellent English and is a great wit. The other evening Kira and I went to his house, rooms I should say, nobody has a house, and met his Mother and sister and little son Andrusha. I was completely captivated by his Mother, who spoke three sentences of English. She's a physician at a hospital and is trying to learn English in the tram each day. But so charming and kind. His sister is quite boyish but couldn't say one word of English. We went to Boris's because we wanted to see a desk and carpet that he is selling, they were better than I expected so we bought the desk, a really old piece of furniture and gigantic, will hide all Kira's papers. The opposite of modern, and cost us twenty pounds, but it's well worth it, and seeing the conditions here in Russia, Kira and I have abandoned our futuristic ideas until things improve but, even though I can see we shall have to have old furniture, I'm determined not to make my rooms so violently Victorian as every room I've been in, with one exception that I'll tell you of. All the others have papers and pictures, awful ones, stuck all over the walls, bits of stuff here and there, flowers, half dead, or artificial, and beautiful hydrangeas completely ruined by masses of bows of ribbon and paper round their base. A general untidiness in which Kira revels, and which I have become accustomed to already. But what with untidiness, and the apparent poverty of all people, nothing matters, not even the maddest stampede to get on to any tramcar, which is nothing compared to the stampede

necessary to get out again. The London tube in "rush" hours is as heaven compared with this: and Marina makes me shriek when she has toes trampled on, or is particularly hustled, or is carried on a stage further than she wants, for she declaims it in a loud voice and with a haughty mien. Then the next time, in despair, we try a *vostchik*. But *vostchiks* are absolutely the limit, for a distance of two and a half miles, from the Nevsky Prospect to here, one man asked as much as six roubles, twelve shillings. However after trying several, and haranguing them all, Marina got one for four roubles, eight shillings, so I got my first ride in what I have always thought was a "drosky." And drosky is droshky.

On Monday evening we had a gay evening at Kobeko's and left at 2.30 A.M. in an open taxi, a real piece of extravagance. But at this time of year there are "white nights" in Leningrad when it is light almost all night, except for about half an hour. It was most uncanny driving home so late and not needing lights, unfortunately the taxi broke down on the bridge over the Neva, there are many but I can't remember its name, and we had to walk half a mile before we found a *vostchik*. All the way, there were drunken men sleeping in the middle of the road, I've never seen so many all my life, and nobody takes any notice of them.

On Sunday we went to the Opera, but the famous singer was not performing, nevertheless it was good, about Russia in Peter the Great's time, and in the evening we went to Yoffey's, I told you about him before, he is the Russian Rutherford. I told you there was one exception to the fact that all rooms in Leningrad are Victorian, well, it is his; but he is rich, for Russia, and has just married a girl thirty years younger than himself. It was rather terrifying to meet the great man, but we ate real caviare and drank tea out of the most beautiful cups I have ever seen. Anyhow in spite of my dumbness I couldn't have made such a bad impression, because he insisted on taking us to see Leningrad in the car

belonging to the Institute. He's the boss, so it's at his disposal.

I don't know what I was going to say next, because the Simeonoffs came to see us as Kira was not well. Natasha Simeonoff is really sweet, petite with golden hair and lots of curls which make a frame for her face, the rest of her hair isn't a bit curly, yet none of the curls are artificial.

Nikolai Nikolaivitch, otherwise Mr Simeonoff, brought me some beautiful lilaac, how do you spell it? really my English is going to the dogs, sometimes I simply cannot think of the right word. I learn a new Russian sentence each day: oh! I was wrong about vostchiks. An open carriage with a horse is a droshky, the driver is the vostchik.

To-day Kira is much better and has gone to the Institute with Igor, so Marina and I are going to sit in the square on the steps of a monument in front of the Winter Palace just because I have a longing to sit there. Afterwards we go to the Hermitage, and then for coffee and finally home in a droshky, all because I want to. I am a baby but they don't seem to mind, in fact they seem to like it.

To-morrow is Kira's birthday, he will be twenty-nine. I got Boris to buy a wallet for me, because he lost the one Jean gave him. I'm quite glad he lost the case, jealous cat, but not the papers that were in it.

The day before yesterday "Mrs Mary," the English-woman who earns her living teaching English here, came specially to see me because she hasn't spoken to an English person since 1916. She likes Kira very much, especially as he really wanted to learn English when she gave him lessons and was not lazy like Igor. But my brother-in-law, Igor, or rather Kira's brother-in-law, Igor, is such a nice soul, like a teddy bear, no one could ever be cross with him.

Now Marina waits for me so I must go, write to me in Kharkov.

Always, BUNNY.

PS. We are going to look after Boris's little boy, Andrusha, age three, in August. He really is the sweetest thing you ever saw, and so serious. He just begins to talk.

### 3

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV, U.S.S.R.

*I think it's Monday, but can't be sure  
2nd<sup>d</sup> June?*

Dearest,

We arrived in Kharkov at 2.55 this morning, miserable hour, and no one met us. So we waded through sleeping peasants who looked as though they had been there all night, heaps of them, to a droshky with sleepy horse and vostchik and after three-quarters of an hour's drive in the most beautiful morning air, arrived here to find every one asleep. However after what seemed hours, Kira woke Lipunsky, a scientist, and Lipunsky woke Obreimov the Director, and then all was well. Such a real welcome. They lit the Samovar and we drank tea and talked and slept and although it is only 10 A.M. we have been all over the Institute and the Institute flats and breakfasted again, and now a note to you, which won't be very long because I begin to feel sleepy.

Kharkov appeals to me more than Leningrad. How Kira and his friends would shudder if they knew! It is so alive and growing that just now it really hasn't developed its final character, it is still so mixed. There are some old buildings and houses, stone, red brick and wood. The wood houses are more like bungalows. Some places are horrible shoddy old, some good old. The new main roads are magnificent, broad, wide, straight, and paved with asphalt. Others are paved with square stones or cobbles. Some are not made roads at all, just

dirt tracks. Those that are unpaved and dusty now, will be quagmires in winter unless they are hard with frost. I've seen no gardens and grass yet. Kharkov is on a hill on the west bank of a river. Not a big river now, but they say in early spring it is broader than the Thames at London, and a rushing roaring flood, which accounts for the banks being so steep. In midsummer it dries up to almost nothing. Across the river are lots of little country houses, village kind, mostly wood. They don't look suburban, but I suppose they would be called the suburbs of Kharkov.

I think that in a few years Kharkov will be most impressive, there are the most interesting buildings going up all over the place. All very modern, and all very well laid out. The Institute with its great courtyard is only one building amongst many, but it is the one of greatest interest to us, of course.

We saw our flat this morning. It is on the second floor of one of the blocks of flats built for Scientific workers. The blocks form two sides of the Institute Courtyard. Trees are to be planted in the Centre, and we hope for grass. It really is going to be very nice. Four rooms, kitchen and bathroom, large double windows and one balcony. We are not going to live in the large block of flats where we thought at first, but have got this larger flat in a smaller and nicer block with Obreimov, who is the Director of the Institute. It has central heating, electric light, hot-water system in kitchen, shower in bathroom, gas in kitchen, rather nice boarding in place of parquet flooring which Kira had expected. Just now everybody seems to be away on holiday in Crimea and the buildings are not finished. So I don't know why there was such excitement about our staying another month in England. However I'm glad to be here at last. The journey from Leningrad to Kharkov was very tedious. The train fares on long distance trains are so reasonable that everyone goes first if possible. It seems necessary to book seven days before, at this time of year, and Kira and I only got two tickets within two



days by smiling on the porter and a very big smile at that! and we could only get first class and not International, which is very much better: and then to crown all, the train was not heated, and for all those two thousand miles, two nights and a day, there wasn't a restaurant car.

As ever, EDNA ALFREDOVNA.

PS. It is funny to hear myself called that here. When I was in Leningrad it was just Eddie. In case I didn't tell you "ovna" means "daughter of" and the Russians use their father's Christian name, not his surname. To think I used to laugh at father being called Alfred, and now I have to be called Alfredovna. "Wife of" is "ova." So my full title fills me with awe. Edna Alfredovna Melnikova. No common Mrs for me!

## 4

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV, U.S.S.R.

Darling M.,

I think it is June 12th to-day, therefore Thursday, but days don't seem to matter very much in a five-day week, it is only the date that counts. Some days are definitely a holiday for the Institute, others not, but I don't see any difference. Kira is at home as often as not, the last days he has been calculating and lost to the world.

Yesterday was quite an eventful day, we got a maid, Natasha by name, "short" for Natalie. She has fair hair tied at the back with a bright green ribbon and is about nineteen or twenty I should think. She is fattish and wears a very short skirt and white jumper, I don't think Mother would approve of her at all, but she's really most efficient. She did all the shopping she thought necessary yesterday, washed up, lit a

fire, cleaned the flat, all between 11 and 5 o'clock. We have made one room really liveable in, very much so if you saw Kira's books. To-day we are going to buy beds and a kitchen table, also some chairs. About three days ago we bought a wardrobe, a cupboard for the dining-room, a long mirror and a divan. It was almost Hobson's choice, and I expect it will be the same with beds. I wanted divans but it is impossible to get the kind I saw in Leningrad. The ones here are stuffed with straw, not very suitable, so I'm afraid it will be two little iron beds for us. The other day there was not a bed to be had.

Yesterday I saw my first film in Russia. We went with another man from the Institute who speaks English quite well but doesn't understand it, can you fathom that? We tried to get in at one film, a Ukrainian film called *The Wind from the Rapids*, but we had to wait an hour before the next performance so we went to the next picture house to *The Way to the World*. First we saw a picture about Kharkov, I had a recollection of tractors, wheels, horses, fields, people, processions, tractors, wheels, trains, tractors, wheels, etc. etc. Then the "big" picture, 1901, small boy gets lost in Leningrad, drunken father, out of work; eight years later, small boy crawls from under gate at dawn, empty streets, snow, barricades, shooting, soldiers, fire. Same boy, now grown youth, with a girl, visits a fair and buys balloons and toys, soldiers tease girl, fight ensues, boy loses job, gets another in a factory, strikes, strikers sent to the front, distracted girl stands in road looking for her lover, at which point we'd had enough, so retired and went to see *The Wind from the Rapids*. At first, wheels, engines, etc., we simply shrieked.\* It seemed as though we had walked out of one picture house into another only to see the same picture. However it was more or less the topical budget or news of U.S.S.R. and then the *Wind* . . . began. Poor music, very small hall, hard seats. However, again, the pilot of a raft shouting orders to

his fair-haired son. The tremendous raft, with hut on it, and about twenty men to propel it over the rapids, was eventually brought to rest at the village, where the engineers were to live. Enter girl leading horses to drink at the river, is teased by an oldish man who is destined for her husband. The story centres round the "spite" of this old man who hates the changes and leads the struggle against the engineers who have come to build a high-power electric station somewhere in this district of Ukraine. The pilot's son believed in the new ideas, was on the side of the engineers, and eventually worked with them. It was, of course, propaganda, so you'll never see it. At the end wheels, cranes, dredgers, etc., and the pilot's son trying to persuade his father to work also, without success.

In July there is a company coming from Moscow Arts Theatre so Kira has just gone to get tickets.

Yours with love from us both, BUNNY.

\* [Russian peasants, used only to wooden hand-ploughs and sledges, knew nothing of the use of wheels and machinery. Before the country could be mechanised and industrialised the peasant population had to be educated to wheels and machinery. Russian scientists and foreigners alike found these films boring, but none the less they knew them to be necessary. This particular film dealt with the electrification of Russia. The as yet uneducated peasants did not understand the meaning of the great new buildings which were being erected for power stations and were inclined in some places to object to the changes around them. Years later, of course, they were enthusiastic about the benefits brought to their lives by electricity.]

*16th June 1930*

Darling M.,

Kira's middle brother turned up suddenly the other night. He is an engineer to a sugar factory, though what engineering has to do with sugar I can't think, and was in Kharkov on business. He has gone to Rostov on Don and will call upon us as he returns to Moscow. At first I could see no resemblance to Kira but at the end of an evening there was a decided similarity of eyes and mouth and hair. He cannot speak English, except thank you, so it was a little tedious to have to be polite for four hours, not understanding one word, and not liking to go to bed. However Kira says I can always go without minding people in future. We are not to have little Andrea after all, Boris has got a divorce and he is leaving Andrea with his sister in Leningrad for a month, then she will come here for a fortnight to find a nurse for him, and Boris and his new wife and Andrea will all live here, Boris and Kira are very keen on having adjoining flats, and it would really be quite nice but in the bottom of my heart I'm not sure that it won't be too much of a good thing sometimes. However if Kira really wants it, I guess I shan't kick any more than I have, by telling him that I hope we shall be alone sometimes. He and Boris will share a study as they work together, this "study" is in our flat, so Boris must have a key. Now he writes from Leningrad, couldn't we try and arrange something with meals, to have them together or prepared together, I don't know which. Perhaps I'm stupid, perhaps it's even jealousy, but I do like to have Kira alone sometimes, and if we do this, whose dining-room shall we use? if ours, then we shall have only a bedroom and sitting-room to call our own. I suppose it's natural he should want to see a lot

of Boris after two years, and being scientists they have so much in common, it's only that I do want it to be "Boris's flat" and "our flat" and not seven rooms for two families or a little commune as Boris said. I'm enclosing a picture post-card, it gives my impression of most Russian rooms. Everybody amusing themselves, in Victorian style rooms, together with a little untidiness which after an hour's conviviality becomes more so.

I'm really sorry about my English, it's going to the dogs I know, but it's natural when the only person I speak to now is Kira, sometimes Obreimov, and sometimes Ivanenko, all speaking different degrees of bad English, especially the latter who called out in the pictures the other night "I want a woman, I want two women." He meant on the film. Here's Kira for tea. .

*After dinner. 7.30*

As for your saying our flat being one quarter as beautiful as yours, never, at least not yet, not until this country settles down. When I look at our furniture, and then think of home, I groan inwardly, and yet Obreimov says it's wonderful what I seem to have done out of nothing, there's an atmosphere of "European culture." I was very pleased. But to go into details about our straw-stuffed divans, or imitation, very imitation leather divan, or our crooked mirror, built crookedly. No. We had "The Cyprus" and "Blue Horses" up unframed, but there are so many flies we've taken them down. Obreimov says it's impossible to get pictures framed just now, there are so many orders the shops are booked up for months. But of course it really is that all the wood must go into building the new factories and flats; there's none over for frivolities, and even if they had the wood, they can't get labour, there are no unemployed in Russia. The factories in Kharkov are always trying to get more workers.

Anyhow the etchings are looking wonderful on our white walls.

I'm alright yet for silks and wools, I'm not sure they wouldn't take them out on the frontier if you did send them, but I hope some books will arrive. It would be better not to send too many at once. The newspaper cuttings were most interesting. The bit from the *Observer*, "Russia on Rations," was exactly what I would like to have written. I think I said that coming on the boat there were Americans going to Stalingrad to work in Tractorstroy. There is a Tractorstroy going up here too, consequently a lot of Americans here also, living in the town until the flats are ready in Tractorstroy. It's about ten miles away across the river opposite our windows, only began to be built this year but seems well in hand. When it's finished it will be a complete community in itself, no tire-some travelling to and fro to work, but it won't be called Tractorstroy then. Stroi means "to build," Tractorstroy means a tractor factory under construction, when it's completed it will be Tractorgavod, tractor works. Isn't my Russian getting on?

As for the trains in Russia, Kira and I left Leningrad at the scheduled time, and arrived at Kharkov, also at the scheduled time, two days later, but, we went to the station two days ago to meet a train coming from Sebastopol, it was more than an hour late. Kira gives the very excellent reason that "something must have happened."

When you say "these English modern novels are not to keep but to pass the time" do you want me to send them back? If not I shall lend them to Natasha Simeonoff, I've already lent her *Isadora Duncan*. By the way Isadora finally settled Kira's mind about an infant. He says he feels sick at the thought of my being ill, and if I were really so he should die. He must be all nerves, because when I dropped the bed on my foot the other day he really wept, and I couldn't cheer

him up all day, although it was really only a bruise. Oh, Mother wrote me that she was reading the articles on Russia and that they seem very sensible!

I haven't dared to go out alone until to-day, Kira forbids it and he's too busy to take me. To-day however I walked for an hour, was accosted by one "drunk" but managed to escape fairly easily. Kira was horrified, and still more so at the thought I might get lost. . . . Kira says you've got the wrong idea about Russian indifference to death, etc. etc., life is not valueless except to the individual, if your death can benefit some cause or other then it has a value. I think I've got it but perhaps he'll write a little note. At present he's very busy so I think it won't be to-day. Kira says you shouldn't say "horrid things do happen even in England" it sounds as though you meant they only happen in Russia.

I often sigh for your knowledge. This is the kind of question that Russians ask. Which is London's greatest theatre? Who are the most popular English writers? Who are the best writers since the Victorian poets?

As always, BUNNY.

6

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV, U.S.S.R.

*28th June 1930. 4.30 P.M.*

Darling,

I am fed up to know that you have been writing letters as diligently as I have and we are neither of us getting them. So far I have more than kept to Kira's legal document about writing every sixth day. He meant every first day of our five-day week. Kira says nothing can be done about getting your letters unless they were registered, I think he's a bit

lazy, but until Boris comes to the Institute and relieves him a bit, I've given up hoping that he'll do anything outside his work. I think this morbid fit must be due to the loss of letters which I really want more than anything else, I've only had four letters altogether, no five, since I left England, and at times just ache for news. Kira also thinks the letters to you have to go through Scotland Yard or somewhere and that's why they're not received, though it's very strange that I get letters from home. In future, if you can afford it will you send them by air?

The days are stifling, and I'm afraid I'm positively boiled. I really love Kira and can't bear to think of life without him, yet some days I could scream. All day he works either at home or in the library and he doesn't want me to go out in case I get lost. I've been out three times alone, twice telling Kira and once without telling him, but Kharkov is not so interesting that it's worth quarrelling over, so now I stay in. Perhaps it's sitting down all day and most of the night that's not agreeing with my innards? Anyhow, in consequence, the sleeve I am embroidering for you is really getting on, but please let me have some green or orange silk to be going on with. Everyone admires the bright colours on the white satin when I bring it out, and get busy while they talk and I don't understand. I often wonder how you are getting on with yours. When they are both done you must take them to — in Bond Street. She'll make it up like a Russian tunic, full long bodice, high collar, the wide embroidered sleeves gathered into plain band at the wrist. White is the Russian colour for tunics.

I'm very sorry to say that I cannot get films for my camera so cannot amuse myself taking pictures to send to you. I wrote home four days ago, but I observe the letters are still lying on the desk, somehow it does annoy me that Kira won't trouble to go to post for me, though I admit he really can't spare the time for the queueing and questionnaires and forms,



etc. etc. I have the time, too much time, but I can't talk Russian well enough to go and do it alone.

Nowadays Kira's so "faddy" over his food, he knows just enough to be annoying, because he's really very cute at guessing what things are. He grumbles at Natasha's cooking, and it's too hot in the kitchen for me except in the evening, he grumbles at the monotony of the food, but knows perfectly well we cannot get cheese, consequently we live mostly on potatoes and eggs. I simply won't try fish, if you could see it lying covered with flies, and the meat too. I suppose all my grievance is that he grumbles, and does nothing to help matters, as often as not I have to try and explain quite intricate things to Natasha, because Kira's too lazy to translate, and really it isn't very good for my Russian, because Natasha speaks Ukrainski, and I am only getting very good at devising plans for explaining my meaning. Still I have started Russian lessons, with a little man named Rosenkievitch, very shy, but quite nice and a good teacher. He is a very good runner and took us to some sports last night, where we met another nice little man, a champion of the U.S.S.R. and as brown as a negro.

To-day the place abounds in fleas, it's not our fault, after rain and heat they are plentiful, and come through the windows. They don't start life as human fleas though they end as such. They live in the Steppes and blow into the towns with the dust. All the towns in the Ukraine abound in dust and most people, foreigners that is, get hay-fever whenever they go to a different town, from the fresh kind of town dust.

This letter is only for you, I shall write gaily to Mother and Father.

EDDIE.

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV, U.S.S.R.

or

TCHAIKOVSKAIA 16

or

RAUKOBCKAR 16

I'm beginning to get brown.

Darling,

I've just got another letter from you, number three, by air mail, left London 26th, Berlin 27th, Moscow 28th, left Moscow 29th, Kharkov 30th, to-day, so I've had two letters and one postcard within the last day or two.

Your letter yesterday spoke of the Russian film *The General Line* and the peasants as they struck you. I feel exactly the same. Russia itself seems so vital, and yet everywhere there are these very primitive people, as yet I have only seen tractors on posters and film, not in reality, though everywhere they are being boomed.

Did I tell you, our china really is quite good. We got it in an antique shop in Leningrad so it is pre-revolutionary, blue and white and gold, the cups I like, but the wavy edge of the saucer spoils them, and the teapot, milk jug and bowl are hideous in shape, still they are the most delicate china I have used in Russia with the exception of Professor Yoffey's. Fortunately our dinner service, not complete, almost matches the tea things so it is quite possible to use the small plates as tea plates. In any case Russians wouldn't appreciate Honey-buff you suggest from Heal's, because the cups wouldn't be big enough, neither are ours, except three we bought in desperation the first day.

My dear lamb, don't run down the poor young wife who spoke only three words during the evening. I don't even do

that sometimes and am utterly bored having to be silent, still my Russian's "a comin' on luv," soon I'll be able to do as I like. When I can talk fluently things will seem so different. Did I tell you the little sportsman here who teaches me Russian is going to run in Moscow in two days' time. I feel quite envious of you having seen *The General Line* but when I meet Eisenstein, as I will if we go to Moscow, and I can da-re to ask him, I'll get his reason for allowing you to be left in mid-air. Kira thinks the music to the International is poor, but the words passable.

Our flats have balconies, but have only iron bars, more modern than the built-in balconies in your London flats. Kira says the latter are like baths, still it sounds very daring for London, but how long will they be "snow-white!" I will send photographs of ours one day.\*

No! no one has told me not to give my impression of Russia and Russian life, but they have talked of censorship, and as our letters have not been delivered I thought it wiser to tell you things by degrees, though I'm c-ertain I talked about the queues for food and shoes in Leningrad, and the easier life here where soap is scarce, and pots and pans scarcer, not to mention the absence of cheese. Things are much easier to get in Kharkov than Leningrad, but terribly expensive until we get our "Tickets" to shop in Co-operative Stores, then butter will be about four shillings instead of eight shillings a pound. We spend about fifteen shillings per day on food alone, buying one pound of meat, ten eggs, two rolls of bread, some carrots and potatoes. Of course if Kira had rejoined the Party, that is the Communist Party, on his return to Russia, we could have had our tickets straight away. Everyone leaving the country has to retire from the Party for the duration of their absence. Kira did not rejoin because members of the Party have to set an example, and though Kira doesn't mind the least little bit, he refuses to let me live on a small income. The maximum for a Communist is four hun-

dred roubles a month, instead of Kira's present twelve hundred. But as Kira is really a staunch upholder of the Party and the Five-Year Plan, and because the Government sent him to Cambridge to prepare him for his work here, they will look after him and things will come all right and we'll get the tickets as soon as Kira bothers to try for them, or when Boris comes he'll try at once, I know, and all will be well, and of course we have the money, so it's only a little patience.

Kira and I shrieked at your thinking it exciting to have a maid called Natasha, if only you could see her, anything but Tolstoyish.

Why am I annoyed? Why, you see Hans writes that they are busy furnishing in Hamburg and says we are in the same boat "setting up house." My Lord, I'd like to be able to buy the things it is possible to buy in Germany, here. It's so stupid, here we are, with enough money to have a really nice home, and it's impossible to buy furniture. We really were fools not to bring an arm-chair or two from England, 'cos they'll never be the same made here, to be stuffed with straw. At present the only chairs to be got are plain wooden chairs like the ones at meetings with round holes in the seats, only these have a pattern, so I suppose we shall buy some eventually, at present we are using Institute chairs. Now in Germany we'd be able to carry out our futuristic ideas even to steel tubes. Still it's rather fun making something out of nothing, and Kira says the Five-Year Plan will make something out of nothing for the whole nation and everyone will have plenty then.

It's definitely decided that Boris will have the flat on the same floor as us, still, if Kira wants to divorce me I can always think of setting up house with you, and giving Russian lessons as a livelihood. Talking of divorce, do you remember the fuss at home and Aunt Jane's horror that I had married a Russian Communist, and, worse still, at the Russian Consulate and under Russian law. I'm certain they thought Kira would divorce me on the boat and marry ten other wives be-

fore the year was over. Really Kira was rather sweet to agree so quickly to a second marriage in a London registry office, because we were married under the law of his country and it's all a question of character not law anyway. Some men and women are faithful and some are not, and we both believe each of us should be perfectly free whenever we want to be, not tied and bound like prisoners under English marriage law. I feel freer married to my adored Kira than ever I did in my free flirtatious Cambridge days with all its petty jealousies. There.

Life certainly isn't dull just now with men coming in to make the kitchen shelves fit better, to put catches on the doors, to mend the glass which has got broken in the windows, to fit keys in the doors, to paint the balcony, etc. etc., all signs of approaching completion.

To-day is Natasha's holiday, the fifth day, so I've been "spoiling" Kira, and he me, by eating five ices. Now we must go and play music with Obreimov and Professor Franklin. They admire the tone of my violin and the first time they heard it got terribly excited, and said What is it? When they found what it was they nearly prayed over it. And I get a terrible thrill out of playing with such fine players. And as they all like the modern Russian composers as much as you and I do, it is grand. How you'd like an evening of Medtner and Prokofiev and Scriabin.

*Five minutes later*

That was a false alarm. Obreimov and Franklin and Kira had to go to a meeting instead of playing. Just now it is the Scientific Conference and Dirac, from Cambridge, is the guest of honour.

You do remember Professor Dirac don't you? Kira thinks the world of him. Last night there was to have been a party for him, but unfortunately he was detained at the frontier having changed his route without informing the authorities.

However we had it without him. Fifteen eminent scientists, fourteen Russians, one German and myself. It was in our flat, I don't know why, unless in this case they would have someone to make and serve tea, also we have more cups than anyone though not enough to go round, and only six glasses, so we drank wine out of my little coffee cups and liqueur glasses. One especially nice man, Professor Tani from Moscow, was awfully sweet to me, and this Professor Franklin has made himself quite at home in our flat, speaks quite good English and though I know him better than Professor Tani, I like the latter best. This conference is a great joke, because everything seemed to go wrong the first day, so now there are cartoons in the office.

1. A sketch of Sasha Lipunsky, Kira and Dirac all with kettles waiting at a tap for water. The water-supply in the flats failed owing to the heat, but now it has been connected with the Institute where a constant supply must be assured.

2. A note "We hope Professors Franklin and Dirac will come again when there is electricity." One night there was no light for four hours.

3. A sketch of Dirac and Franklin's flats, two pallet beds, with a notice "You may buy a mattress in the town if you wish," notice over the electric switch "Out of order," notices in the bathroom and lavatory "Out of order." So you see Russians have quite a sense of humour sometimes.

Yesterday we had another dust storm. These last about ten to fifteen minutes, but are so violent that from the Institute not a house in Kharkov is to be seen, it's just as though a great black cloud had descended and covered the town and country beyond. Only a gigantic wall could be so effective in blocking it from our sight. I suppose it must be like a sand storm in the desert, only this wind comes from the Steppe. It is very effective anyhow, as long as one's inside, and the double windows are shut tight. Even then the most extraordinary things can happen. Obreimov went into his laboratory

after the last sand storm and sitting on his chair was a big fat tarantula.

Kira bought me some beautiful gypsophila and red carnations to-day. I suppose when we go into the other flat it will begin to look quite homelike. I don't think we shall keep Natasha long, unless she improves, she's so extravagant, and a bit stupid, rather peasantish. She spends whatever we give her and isn't a very good cook though I can put up with it better than Kira.

Your, "BUNNY."

PS. Isn't this toffee paper eloquent? It tells what the Russians are going to do about transport. Great locomotives, brick and steel bridges across valleys and wide rivers like the Firth of Forth bridge. Seeing it on toffee paper, everyone can see the plans.

\* [The constant reference to the balconies, and to Eddie's and Kira's own balcony in particular, which was one of the first to be built, strikes a strange note in our ears to-day. It was from these former happy balconies that the Germans hanged the people of Kharkov when they captured that town. The balconies were a special feature of Kharkov in years to come: they bear the special sign of Nazi atrocity.]

## 8

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV

2nd July 1930

Dearest,

I believe you'd really prefer this page torn from an exercise book, to "Kharkov's best" pink paper, which looks like chicken-pox as soon as you write on it.

Dr X from Cambridge introduced us recently to an Eng-

lishman who has been here since 1924, teaching English at the High School. I was quite pleased at the idea, but I hope now that we never see him again. Kira dislikes him as much as I do, and thinks he knows nothing, though he says he knows all about Russia "having studied its peculiar state all last year." I really am ashamed of his being an Englishman. Once he asked me whether I'd any modern English books with me and when I said "Only a few" replied "Oh! I've a library in my rooms." What can one say? And he seemed so impatient at our not knowing there are two symphony orchestras in Kharkov and that one could read *The Times* in the library in Town, or that one could get old English novels, good ones, in the public library.

Enough of him.

Mother sent a pound of coffee yesterday by air mail. It cost six shillings to come, it's simply wonderful to be drinking good coffee again. By the way I was very pleased to see that England has such interesting half-crown stamps, much more daring than any other I've seen. I tried to get it off the paper but the glue was too good, and we don't have such good paper that I want to spoil it by cutting a hole in it. Yesterday Kira and I were terribly lucky, we went to town at 9 A.M. for ices, and managed to get a very primitive oven, to fix on a primus or gas-ring, and also a smallish pan, rather like a diminutive fish-kettle, though iron and very heavy, still now we shall be able to boil something. Do you know till now everything has had to be fried? for the simple reason that I could not buy a saucepan anywhere. Wasn't it lucky that mother put that frying-pan into my trunk when I came away? or we'd have had no pan at all. And at the time I hooted at her.

I'm living for next summer. If you can come in July perhaps you will be able to see Kharkov and then we'll do something exciting, go to Crimea or the Caucasus. How I long for you to come.



Natasha has just arrived, I wish she weren't such a vulgar reproduction of "Minney." Still she's done well this morning, having spent thirteen roubles or twenty-six shillings for one pound of meat, half-pound of liver, one pound of butter, quarter-pound of cream cheese, half-pound of raspberries, half-pound of cherries, two pounds of potatoes and some special grass which is typical of all Russian soup it seems to me. So you see if you judge by the price Russian life is very high, but if you judge by the difficulty of getting a quantity of food, it's not so high.

Kira and I are very amused because Dirac tells us our sudden departure caused great scandal in Cambridge and that everyone thinks Kira was called back for political reasons.

## 9

KHARKOV

*4th July 1930*

Dearest,

Here I am again after a little lapse, and I notice my first letter is still on the table. However we are going to town to get some cakes, Dirac is coming to coffee to-night, and we shall post your letter on the way, and send it by air. I do hope to-day is better than yesterday, when not a single shop or kiosk had change, not even for a one-rouble note. It does seem stupid to wait in a queue for perhaps twenty minutes and then not be able to buy what you want because there's no change. Kira and I waited half an hour yesterday for an ice, but we got it in the end. I do wish you could be with me sometimes, it would interest you to see how Russian shops differ from English ones. Firstly, if you don't know the price you must ask, either the person behind the counter or the cashier. It varies. Then you must get into the queue at the

desk, generally of twenty people. Then as often as not some youth or old woman will go straight to the desk, professing ignorance of the queue or else loudly maintaining they have change and therefore don't need to wait in a queue. At this everybody gets very excited and gesticulates and the queue gets out of order. Then one man will dash from the middle of the queue and push his way to the "box office" and loudly tell the girl not to take the money from those not in the queue, and seizing his opportunity, get his ticket, and go off leaving the rest of the queue to gape at their "benefactor." Anyhow in spite of all these excitements and entertainments, you tell the girl how much you want to spend and she, very crossly, gives you a ticket for that amount, I say "crossly" because I've not seen a pleasant cashier yet. After this triumph you give your ticket to the girl behind the counter and you get your goods, but never are you trusted to take the goods without this precious ticket, however small the shop. And however big the shop there is only one "Kacca" or desk, so I leave you to imagine the time wasted on occasions.

I've just finished a green linen dress that I started in Cambridge so am feeling spruce, it makes me look quite brown. Last night a whole lot of us, seven men and myself, I haven't seen any women here yet to speak of, they all seem to be away or non-existent, went to a "Kino," it turned out to be an American film in twelve parts beginning at 10.20 P.M. and we had to walk home at midnight, 12.45 when we got home and 2 A.M. when I went to bed so I don't know what time Kira arrived. He was still working in his laboratory. But the film, what bilge. I prefer Russian propaganda films to Hollywood sex.

Obreimov went off to his family in Crimea yesterday looking very tired, and his pussy-cat now sleeps at my elbow while I write.

The shortage of shoes I hear was because the peasants bought up all the shoes, sometimes as many as twenty pairs

of different-size shoes for one house, and then re-sold them on the streets during the shortage at fabulous prices, and I guess it's the peasants who are collecting all the small change.

Boris comes to-morrow, I look forward to it with mixed feelings, Kira I suppose will be glad, and in consequence we shall all be gay, but, tu comprends?

As ever, EDDIE.

IO

KHARKOV

*Also 6th July 1930, but some hours later*

Darling,

Kira and I went to town and bought some films and camera tackle, red bulbs and developers and so on. Then we came home and took some photographs from the balcony. Truly Kharkov at night is a wonderful sight. Most rooms in Kharkov are lived in because of the housing shortage, and as no one seems to have curtains, the lights shine out undimmed, it is lovely. You'd think people would stare into each other's rooms, but they don't seem interested in each other's business. It is the same with the newspapers, they do not print all the stupid gossip that we do, bigger things to discuss. All the same I like some privacy and we shall have curtains as soon as I can find some material.

Each night we will develop and print until the photographs are done. We have converted the bathroom into an excellent dark room, and Kira is quite a clever photographer so we ought to get good results. We went to town the day after Kira was not well and very luckily were able to hire a piano, after one month's continual failures, a Bechstein grand, twenty-five roubles, that is two pounds ten shillings per month, so it's not bad, thirty pounds a year I suppose. It ar-

30

rived yesterday, so for the first time since we landed here Kira and I practised last night. Grieg, violin and piano sonatas. Some César Franck, Saint-Saëns and your favourite *Romance* by Svensden. Then Kira played to me, Rachmaninoff and some Scriabin till the early hours of the morning and now I feel that it's music I missed so much, and was so bored sometimes because we couldn't play.

Boris arrived two days ago. He lives in the bathroom, having showers and baths, and then for a change goes to the pool just below for a swim. Now he is playing tennis. Somehow, though, since he arrived things seem to be happening. This past fortnight it's been very hard to get cigarettes, but beginning next week we are going to have them sent to the Institute, so there will be no queues, and there will be cigarettes for certain. I've given up smoking almost, have only smoked about three cigarettes since I came to Russia. Also we are actually going to have some tickets to shop at the Co-operative stores and, last of all, Boris is going to find a nice place near a river not far from Kharkov for us to go for our holiday. Certainly it will be useful having Boris near and friendly if he can produce such wonderful results, won't it? He is much more practical than Kira and is witty enough to get what he wants even when people don't want to let him have it. His first wife is bringing Andrea on the ninth, on her way to Crimea, and we are all three going to look after him until Boris's second wife arrives on the seventeenth. *N.B.* she turns out not to be a ballerina after all, but that's a secret, his first wife must go on thinking she's a ballerina, so not a word.

I've not got your books yet, but have not finished Tolstoy's *War and Peace* so they can be a little longer on the way. In August I think we go to Odessa, Kira was asked to be President at the conference there. At first he was very tired, and didn't want to go at all, but this Institute is the chief of all the Institutes in Ukraine and as the Ukrainians are very faith-

ful to their particular race, like Scotsmen, it is decreed that at least fifty per cent. of the students here must be Ukrainian, and as Kira doesn't know any of the young Ukrainian scientists, the only way of getting to know them is to go to this conference, so it seems almost certain we shall go. But I'm wise now and never regard plans as definite until they are actually in operation.

Kira is very fed up with himself, after two months without a piano he says his playing has gone off, but to hear him practising Czerny you'd never think so. After an hour of it, he will play Bach for a bit.

It's rather nice being able to see the ripening fields of corn to the left of Kharkov, one feels they mean so much. . . . If it surprises you I talk in one letter about seeing ripening fields from my window and the hills of Tractorstroy in another, we haven't moved. It is that our bank of the river, the west bank, is high and hilly while the east bank is almost flat and for mile after mile the corn grows on the steppes.

It is said that it's the same with all the rivers in Ukraine. They flow from north to south and the wind from the steppes has blown the dust westwards across the streams for centuries and that has made the hills. Does that sound sense? A foreign scientist at the Institute said it was so and who am I?

Of course you don't see hedges to the cornfields like home, but there are occasional trees, they grow well enough once they are planted, beech particularly. Cornland in England is usually forestland that has been cleared, but in Russia the steppes never were forestland, rather like moors in fact, but they will grow trees when planted if well looked after.

At present Boris is staying here until his own rooms are ready, personally I think he'll stay until his wife comes. I often wonder how long my English manners will triumph over Russian ones, it will be rather an interesting point. I am really very amused at people who visit us. The Russians just take everything for granted, except Boris and Franklin. The oth-

ers just don't mind as long as there's something to eat or drink, though they're rather scared by cups and saucers which will obviously break if dropped. A German named Alsasser "Alsace" never forgets to say "How nicely you arranged it" or "How comfortable it here is." He also says that although the furniture is Russian the rooms look European and not Russian. When I get my open fireplace they will look almost English.

With love from us both, BUNNY.

## I I

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV, U.S.S.R.

*8th July 1930*

Darling,

Now that Boris is here I think I shall be able to send more letters by air mail. He almost lives in the Post Office, of necessity, because it is always so crowded and so many bureaucrats behind the windows that one must waste half an hour or more to post a letter.

I too have two Noel Coward's records and Kira loves them, they really are clever. I miss English theatres and pictures so, but perhaps in the winter it will be better, on the thirteenth we hope to go and see the artists of the Moscow Arts Theatre here in Kharkov, but cannot be certain. Everyone goes to the theatre in Russia, so it's always hard to get tickets. Nearly always queues.

I suppose the sublime days of an English summer are over for me. Here the earth is so dry, all is brown and parched, and one is not allowed to sit on grass which is green. You see I was wrong! there is some, even in Kharkov, about five yards of it in the main square, but it is so coarse.

What is the M.P., the *Morning Post* or a Member of Parliament? Personally I see no signs of religious persecution here. Priests, truly seeming very decrepit, go about at will, and don't appear to beg for food. I have seen three churches in Kharkov in process of demolition, but they are allowed to remain as long as twenty people attend and as long as those twenty will keep it in order, otherwise the church is demolished and some more "houses for workers" or clubs for workers built on the site.

Once also two small girls came and sold papers which I supposed might be termed "Anti-religious propaganda" in the Tramcar, though one was "Anti-Fascist."

Write again soon.

Yours, as ever, BUNNY.

14th July

Six days gone. I think it's the longest I've been without writing, but since Andrusha, Boris's little son, came there hasn't been a minute. He, the little son, really is a sweet thing, I see all his charms still, but I shall like him so much better when he goes to his own flat. Here he has been since the ninth and I've got to the stage when I could scream when he cries, or when he continually bangs a door, or plays with the kitten. However to-morrow Boris really intends to go to his own rooms, this, because Kira's brother and his wife have written to ask if they may come for a night on the sixteenth. Boris at first didn't take the hint, and said it would be quite easy to fix a room for them in the Institute, but Kira to-day said that he must borrow two rooms so that his brother and wife and ourselves could be alone and so we are going to have our flat to ourselves again. Oh! if you only knew how glad I am. Boris is alright, but I couldn't bear to have him in the house all day, or to have to do everything with him. He's been here since the fifth, and I feel I've never had Kira

to myself since. All Boris's friends come in here and stay hours, all our meals are disarranged for Boris, all our house is upset for Boris, poor Natasha must lock the kitchen door to keep Andrusha, Boris's son, out. I must lock the bedroom door to keep Andrusha out, the poor little kitten must spend its days on the balcony for fear of Andrusha, all the food I cook and think will do more than once is eaten by them. The little boy is a pig, and Boris lets him be. However I feel that nothing matters now they're going to-morrow. Kira also is rather fed up, so much so that Kira and I are not going away with Boris after all, we couldn't stand it, or if we could, it would be no holiday, and Kira must rest. So we're going to stay in Kharkov and move into our real flat before going to Odessa at the end of August. I'm really glad, because life can be very peaceful here. I was foolish to say that Kira was waiting for Boris to do everything, still one must have moods I suppose.

We didn't—Lord there's Andrusha shrieking again!—get tickets for the theatre after all, seven people applied and there were only four tickets left, so we have to draw lots. It is for the eighteenth. You can't imagine how popular the theatre is here. When I think of past days in Lancashire where people thought you might just as well go to the devil as go to the theatre! Russia is broadminded anyway.

Last week a protégé of Boris's came, he lives here almost, every morning ten to twelve or twelve-thirty, afternoon two to six, evening seven to —? I can't say, I'm always asleep after twelve-thirty. Anyhow last night we played piano and violin, and suddenly to my utter amazement this man went to the piano and stood, and with hands clasped, and with amazing contortions, sang in a voice that I am positive rocked the house. It really was deafening, he began with *La Traviata*, went on with Armenian folk-songs and the "The Volga Boat-song," all unaccompanied. I had to play with my wedding



ring to keep myself from giggling. I'm waiting for Kobeko to come and give his promised Russian dance in the autumn. I want to learn it.

Your BUNNY.

PS. Don't you like this little Ukrainian man? As yet I haven't seen a man wearing the complete costume, but lots of them wear bits of it, and the women dress in the Ukrainian manner quite a lot.

## I 2

*16th July*

Darling,

I am sending another dividend warrant for you to wrestle with and I should be very glad if you can arrange to have what money is due to me paid into either your bank or mine and afterwards please use it for any requests I make, such as Goddard's plate powder.

Boris's wife came this morning. I was very angry because it is Natasha's holiday, and therefore I had to get the dinner ready, for six of us, and they left me both the two little boys to look after as well, and they quarrelled violently, and I couldn't explain anything and neither could they. Anyhow I was also cross because we expected Kira's brother to-day and so I had washed the bathroom floor after Natasha had, and dusted and swept to make a good impression, and this son of Boris's wife rode his tricycle all over the rooms. However now they're in their own flat, still expecting me to cook, and in a few days they go away, so after twentieth, peace. Kira and I are not going away after all, did I say so before? and we're dining in the restaurant so I shan't have anything to do, and I have told Natasha not to come so that we can be

quite alone, and afterwards we go to Odessa. To-morrow we are actually going to the theatre, and the day after, Boris's brother comes.

Write soon.

Your BUNNY.

## I 3

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*22nd July 1930*

Dearest,

I'm afraid this letter will be very dull as I haven't slept much the last two nights. Kira is ill. A few days ago he began to develop the same kind of spots that he had in Lenin-grad, and as they are very painful, he was afraid they would go the same way as the others. However they have gone almost, but he felt simply rotten, and just lay about with a temperature until bedtime, when to my horror he began to be delirious. Fortunately Kira's brother, Feydya, and his wife are here and so were able to get a doctor. It happened to be a friend of their father's, Dr Knabe. He came at eleven last night for coffee, but really to see Kira. As a result Kira must have complete rest, no noise, no anything, no work and so on, he must lie down and not go out for a week, he must have baths with pine stuff in. He must take pills, he must take medicine in milk three times a day, he must be bandaged and so on. All NERVES with a capital N, nerves connected with his spine. Knabe was very pleased to find Kira had a wife, and says Kira's health is in my hands. Now I know, I'm not so frightened, but I was terrified before. Kira and I were going away to-morrow for a fortnight with Luba, Feydya's wife, and very jolly, but Knabe said "No." Luba and Feydya have been here four or five days, Feydya's gone

to Moscow to-day, and Luba goes to this Ukrainian village to-morrow. I would like to have gone, because everything is very cheap and I want to buy a peasant costume, and some material for curtains, and some picturesque pots for cooking, and flowers, but evidently it's not to be, poor Kira is so fed up. However to-day somehow we've got to get rid of Natasha, she's been proved dishonest and Luba says she's lazy and impolite, and altogether impossible. I'm glad she's going. Kira and I will get the woman downstairs in the restaurant to do our cooking, and will spend about five roubles a day instead of seventeen or twenty, and I shall be able to look after Kira and make little surprises now and then, so when Luba goes to-morrow, and Natasha, and Boris, we shall be completely alone. I actually did some shopping, bought fifteen cakes, and got Kira's watch from the repairers. It was very funny in the watch shop. It was really shut, shops either shut at four-thirty or keep open till ten, but I managed to get what I wanted, and have decided it's very useful not to be able to speak Russian sometimes, people are all out to help. This morning I bought some rolls and wasn't cheated and from a peasant woman too. We have taken quite a lot of snaps, but they must wait till Kira's better before we print them.

I like my brother-in-law Feydya and his wife Luba, but not so much as my others Marina and Igor. When Luba and Feydya came they carried out an old Ukrainian custom. They gave us bread and salt. The loaf was a tremendous cottage loaf and the salt was in a quaint little brown saucer, like the pottery Mrs Kapitza had, and it was handed on a long cloth of hand-woven linen, like an English table runner, with bright red cross-stitch on each end, all expressing the hope that we shall never be without bread or salt.

*23rd July*

It is very amusing to have your letter talking about Natasha as though she were a fixture, when she departed from

us in wrath yesterday. To-day we start again, and I'm going to make a chart of our expenses and put it by the chart of Kira's temperature over his bed to amuse him. I'm beginning to do things by myself at last. Yesterday I went to a Co-operative Store, and as I've told you before, in Kharkov there seems to be no change, however in spite of the fact that there was already somebody waiting at the "kacca" they took my note and gave me change. Luba who came with me but wouldn't say the Russian for me, only to me, was very amused. This morning I was very daringly going for milk alone, but on the way I met the woman from the restaurant and she said there was some downstairs. But later I'm going to buy some rolls and butter myself, it is now six roubles a pound. We've discovered that Natasha was "rooking" us, and soap, which once went up to four roubles for a piece, was never more than one rouble, two shillings. However one lives and learns, and after a month living alone, and dining in the restaurant, we shall be rich again. When Kira is better he is to have an X-ray photograph of his lungs, and it is probable that we shall go to Crimea after all, as Dr Knabe says it is the best place for him, and if we can get rooms I think something will be done. But now of course it is not certain that we shall go to Odessa as Kira couldn't stand the strain of being President of such a big Scientific Congress, and he's not keen on going, except that this Institute won't be represented if he doesn't. That, of course, would be very wrong, as it is the chief Institute in Ukraine.

Luba has gone to the station to buy her ticket for this evening. She went at nine. It's now twelve and no signs of her. Perhaps it will be three before she returns, for you can never hope to get a railway ticket in less than two hours, and for long distances it is impossible to get a ticket the same day.

Your flat sounds delightful, I only wish ours could be, still "our" piano is a wonderful addition. To hire is much cheaper in Russia but when Kira writes a book we'll buy

one. Did I tell you this is a Bluthner, originally came from Aeolian Hall, Bond Street.

I feel positively jealous when I hear you say "Mother rushed out and bought some more," if only I could rush out and buy something; but it's impossible, my stuff for curtains will not be gold net, nor blue velvet. For the first year we shall leave the walls white, and I shall try and get some small-patterned cotton stuff and make the windows cottagy.

If Luba stayed long enough, she'd try and persuade Kira to wait until we go to Moscow to buy some heavy stuff such as Russians love. I will, when we go, but for the summer and autumn I want light airy curtains: also, if I get heavy Russian linen, Russian crash in England, I shall want to embroider it somewhere, and that will take time, and the rooms look bare without curtains, though I shall not cover my windows as is general in Russia in those houses that do have curtains.

Your story of your partner's dancing . . . reminds me of Samov, he positively has no rhythm. When having dancing lessons with Miss —— he said, "Why is it necessary to have music?"

Your BUNNY.

## I 4

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

*24th July 1930*

Dearest,

Yesterday I had a letter from Mrs Kapitza, as well as one from you, also one from Kira's "beloved!" Miss —— \* asking us to find a post for a governess in Kharkov. Wouldn't a "governess!" be appreciated in modern Russia? Mrs Ka-

pitza's letter was just like her and I really felt pleased, she said she had sent you two addressed envelopes, and certainly your letter was delivered more promptly, and so I am enclosing some typed addresses, please get a pot of glue and stick one on your letters, and then they can't say delay is all due to difficult handwriting, and if ever you have a spare envelope please enclose it; envelopes and paper are scarce and expensive and rotten when you do get them. Did your little red clay doll arrive safely? I bought it off a peasant in a neighbouring village for five kopeks. All the children have them, but they break more easily than the china dolls we had as children.

Kira was a little better this morning, but now his temperature's gone up, he's fed up with life. His chart is like a row of inverted V's, while the money chart is a slope up.

To-day I don't feel in a very letter-writing mood, slept too much, because the heat is terrific.

EDDIE.

\* Why beloved I do not know.—KIRA.

## 15

*27th July*

Now darling I'm sitting on the balcony having finished the day's work, I do so often wish you could be with me to laugh at the strange things one does here, quite naturally. But as you're not, remains only my poor attempts to describe Kira and me sitting on the edge of the station platform, feet on line, waiting for a train from Sebastopol, three hours late; of Boris and Kira and me sitting on the edge of the pavement waiting for a tram and finding ten kopeks; of Kira playing Bach in his birthday suit; of me cutting Kira's hair; of peaceful days slipping by with nothing to show but a little

embroidery, and any and every kind of English book being devoured; of my violin and a new piece of Scriabin learnt with Kira; of cakes bought and squashed in a tramcar that was rather like the "black hole of Calcutta"; of me washing dishes and dusting, in my bathing costume: of me buying ten sweets at eleven kopeks each in an old cotton frock and bedroom slippers which everyone thinks are wonderful shoes. On the fifteenth we hope to go into our flat, Boris has had to make another temporary move to-day. They asked us to go with them but Kira said they'd move the things over his dead body if we moved. He's much better to-day and temperature almost normal.

Last night there was a tremendous fire near the Institute. It lasted three hours, and in spite of it's being a fire it was a wonderful sight. First we heard it was a resin factory, but afterwards a "children's house." But in any case no one was hurt, though it took seven engines to put it out.

I'm going to begin making a list of things I'd like for Christmas, said she hopefully. But I do want one of those aluminium pans made in two sections: or an electric toaster, or an electric iron, or some metal polish, and some heaven-sent baking powder, or some Harpic, please, soon, a small tin.

Now Kira and I will practise. He is playing already and calling me to get out my violin.

Love, BUNNY.

16

*30th July*

Dearest,

Boris is going to post this so will write a few more lines. Just had one of Father's letters, but please "dorogoy moyya"

send me a copy of *Nash's*. Get one from the publishers if not on any stalls now. Father says you appear in it, I shall not write again until I get one.

Kira is better to-day, we went into town to pay for the piano so now we shall rest.

In six or seven days we shall move into our new flat. Boris is having alterations made in his, as his wife doesn't like the present arrangement. For a few days they lived above us and it was impossible, the little things were always knocking at the door. Now they're in the next block but one, so we hardly see them, for which I'm very thankful. I shall get very angry if they knock on our new flat.

BUNNY.

17

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV

*31st July 1930. 12.30 P.M. Lunch*

Darling,

To-day is completely wonderful, one of the days one sees on Swiss postcards, hot and clear, and everything seems so simple. This morning I got up at nine and went out shopping all by myself. I bought Kira some smetana or sour cream, forty kopeks a glass, one pound of butter for six roubles, two rolls for twenty-five kopeks each, and some milk thirty kopeks a measure. A measure is like a large enamel cup. Then I had a cold bath, and Kira and I drank milk and ate rolls and butter in the dining-room, the coolest place in the morning. Afterwards we practised hard for an hour and a half. Kira is teaching me some Beethoven so you'll be pleased. Then we read for a little, and then for lunch to the restaurant, where



we ate cucumbers, tomatoes, salted herring and potatoes, and drank genuine wheat-coffee made with milk.

To-night there will be "Borsch," a special Ukrainian soup made of tomatoes and cabbage. At first I hated it, but now really like it. Then meat and potatoes, or meat and rice, and then fruit, or milk pudding, so the fare is not so bad.

Obreimov came back from Crimea yesterday, and was so enthusiastic about it, perfect climate, scenery, sea-bathing, sun-bathing, that if we can move flats fairly soon, we may go to the sea for a fortnight, before going to Odessa.

Kira really gets better, but of course must still rest. I wonder if you could send me a really good book for teaching English. It will have to begin from the very beginning, even the alphabet, the Russian alphabet is not the same as ours, and yet go on to quite an advanced stage, perhaps two books together? It may turn out that I shall teach some of the research students English. They are planning a High School in connection with the Institute, and it will be necessary to teach two languages, but unfortunately there are not enough teachers, so if I get on with my Russian, it might be rather amusing to teach English to ten youths of twenty for one or two hours every five days, and then I should have a little pin-money to buy surprises for Kira.

Don't say anything about it yet, but send a book for me to look at soon.

The Boris's were to have had a maid yesterday but she didn't appear. Kira and I are fed up with children, there seem so many everywhere, so for a bit we are "off" little things.

2.40 P.M.

Why must you talk about English food? Here was I only one hour ago telling you about our meals, trying to persuade myself that it's not too bad, but if only you knew how I long for a piece of English pastry, some fresh fish, some fresh

fruit, that is grape fruit, bananas, pears, large ones and apples, or some cheese, or some perfectly stupid things like lemonade, lemons, but wait until I come to England, I'll just be a pig and eat sundaes until I burst.

You are perfectly right about Kira's teeth, this is the result of my attempt at persuading him. Of course he couldn't wear them on the boat, he might have lost them overboard in spite of the fact that the sea was like glass. In Leningrad he wasn't well enough, he had to "settle down" in Kharkov before trying them, then he was ill, now again, and he won't wear them in Odessa, too busy, and when we come back he will be too busy and worried, and nearer Christmas he will be too tired, and so we shall go through life.

This morning Kira and I went to look at our flat, it is finished, and now we're only waiting for the floor to be thoroughly dry. Perhaps in two or three days' time we shall move in. I can't help feeling a bit disappointed with the colour of the floor, it's a lightish brown, perhaps it wouldn't be so bad if one could see the boards through, I told you the wood was lovely, but they've covered it with a kind of paste which when set looks like linoleum. Perhaps it may look better when polished, and in any case it's a very nice flat.

Kira really doesn't mean to hurt you and for the last week he's been saying he must write, and he only writes to Mother so they won't get panicky and think he's neglecting or divorcing me yet. Ssh.

I'm half sitting, half lying on the balcony, gasping. The balcony seems on fire so that explains the writing. If only we could have a little rain and coolness.

*2nd August*

PS. Kira is buying ten pounds of sugar to-day and as we've been without for a week imagine the joy. Also we shall get some from the Co-operative so we're in clover.

*Midnight, 31st July 1930*

I am very pleased with myself to-night having rigged up a lamp for use on the balcony. The dark-room lamp, without the red glass, can be suspended from the balcony. Kira and I have just come in.

I've got a terrible craving for Bird's Custard, could you possibly send a tin? Kira's got a "head" so we shall go to bed and hope it will be better to-morrow.

"EGU."

*2nd August*

I received the package about the opening of the Westminster Housing Estate to-day, and the *Truth about Russia* which Kira says is rot.

To-day I feel a bit green, Kira being sympathetic says it's the moon.

We really will move in a day or so. I've started packing.

Your BUNNY.

*2nd August*

[*From Eddie's husband, Kira. Enclosed in Letter 20*]

[This letter is left exactly as it was written. It is proof that Kira had a command of English and also a sense of humour not generally easy to express in a foreign language. Eddie's sister had sent photographs of Council Flats in London.]

Dear Marian,

If I have not written before, it is not because I did not think to do so, but owing to circumstances. I did not think that it is worth while to write uninteresting letter, as any that I would have written before would been. Now I feel myself better and therefore hasten to repair my fault etc.

Eddie received your letter this morning with great joy and we spent all day looking at your beautiful block [Westminster Council Flats], it reminds me of a sentence "I'll knock your block off."

I think that the architecture is really beautiful, but I am not very fond of vertical windows and also baths in kitchens. Soon we shall be able to send to you some photos of our permanent flat, and also of our Institute.

After to-morrow we are about to move into our new flat.

Eddie would like me to write to you about life in Russia, the "general situation" e.t.c. but I would rather leave it until I shall be in good mood to give you a good description.

Regarding the newspaper cuttings you sent from England I am very pleased to say dear Sister, that all are rubbish, except some about five years plans, for I always remember that Russian trains are the best in the world. Really they are not so bad. What for are you going to Oberammargau? What a waste of time and specially money. You could come here and not spend so much. Can I persuade you to come before next summer. It would be lovely. Really. Do you not think that my English is improving?

What is Eddie's Russian? it is going quite well and she can now go to the town without me and do some shopping. Please write a long letter to me to show that you forgave me. Thank you for your birthday wishes.

Your KIRA.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV

12th August 1930

Darling,

We are in our own flat at last, which explains why it is ten days since I wrote to you—so busy moving.

I am getting brown but Luba's terribly brown, like a gypsy, after sun-bathing for a month. By the way I saw some gypsies actually dressed like the little doll I sent, pink and white striped skirt, cross-stitch pattern apron, flowered shawl round shoulders and ear-rings.

Kira and I are just off to Boris's, but we shan't stay long, Kira's evolved a new theory and is anxious to finish calculations before going to Odessa, so that he can confide it to Yofey, who is also trying to make a theory about the same point.

Till later then.

N.B. That expression is good Russian, so now I'm a real Russian. Kira teases and says "Hello! my little Bolshy."

*14th August*

I do wish sometimes you could spend a month as I do, you'd probably be bored and rush about the country-side looking for museums, etc. or studying the economic situation or reading all the great books. For me the days just float. If I don't want to do anything, there is no need. I can come and go exactly as I like. Sleep as long as I like. Stay up as late as I like. I think it will be very bad for me being so free, but I do appreciate it.

I may get another letter in, before we go away. But if not I shall write from Odessa, where I am sure to have a lot of time on my hands while Kira is at meetings. The German, Alsasser, has just come back from the Caucasus, and is very fit. He went to our old flat last night hoping to find us in, but of course couldn't make us hear. So he comes to-night. I must make the flat look nice.

Boris and his wife came this morning before we were up, but we all drank tea in our bedroom and heard this funny talk.

Juke aged five, son of Mira Borisleovna, that is Boris's new wife, whom I discovered has been married three times, said yesterday, "Marina, aren't there a lot of nice people in

the world and so nice to look at?" so Mira said, "Why who do you mean?" "Oh," was the reply, "Eddie and Kira, they're so pretty."

And I've been wearing old frocks for the last month and Kira's been growing a beard. It, the beard, got quite long, but as we're going to Odessa Kira doesn't want to be seen by Yoffey in such an untidy state so off it came yesterday.

Isn't the world of scientists extraordinary, Obreimov has quarrelled violently with one theorist here, and it is possible that Ivanenko will refuse to return, so Obreimov has bargained with Sasha Lipunsky, an awfully nice man, that if he settles his quarrell with Dimus, that is Ivanenko (pronounce all I's in Russian as ee), he will give him two bottles of champagne. Dimus is very amusing, a friend of Gamov, and my hat, his voice, much worse than Johnny's, and never ceasing.

Kira and I are going to the post now so will get this off, Kira had a telegram this morning begging him to go to Odessa, so it's a good job he decided to do so.

Kira is very pleased still, his theory hasn't failed yet, and Grigori Efimovitch also thinks well of it, he's a theoretist and I suppose almost ugly, like Mephistopheles, but a caricature of him. He has been very kind, and Kira likes him so there must be something in him.

Must stop now and pack for Odessa.

EDDIE.

## 20

*In the train en route for ODESSA  
8 P.M. 16th August 1930*

Darling M—,

Here we are actually out of Kharkov! Yesterday morning the "brave soldat," or the concierge, went to the station at

4 A.M., and again at 9 A.M., to get tickets for to-day to Odessa—he could only get one—and as four of us are going that wasn't much use. To-day he went again—and managed to get three more tickets. Imagine my surprise and Kira's *anger* when they turned out to be *third class* without sleeping room. It meant sitting on wooden seats among at least a hundred people—half of whom stood at the windows and completely stopped any air getting in—also the sleeping accommodation is arranged like bunks in a ship—row after row. It wasn't very pleasant—but it seemed silly to me to go home, so I persuaded Kira to take them, as it's only for one night and half a day. So we started on our first trip from Kharkov!

However Strelnikov—who was with us in this black hole of Calcutta—went and found Lipunsky who had the lucky ticket—and together they “persuaded” the conductor to find some better places. After two hours we changed to this really superior carriage!—first class, sleeping, so Kira is his normal smiling self again and I can take an interest in the landscape! I have seen what I took to be a collective-farm at last—and *one* tractor!

*August 17th. 2.30 P.M.  
Na poezd—in the train!*

Here we are again—much nearer to Odessa than last night—although this is a *stopping* train. Still it's much more amusing than a stopping train in England—because at every station we rush like madmen to buy melons, red inside, like we bought in Corsica and very good—they are *real* water melons—or tomatoes—or cooked maize which one nibbles off the stalk!—or buns like stones!—or bottles of beer or lemonade—and the train just blows and then starts, so heaps of people nearly miss the train—having to run a quarter of a mile and then hang on to a rail of a carriage which doesn't belong to them! and this isn't a corridor train—so there is no connection between carriages. We've just stopped at a station, puzzle

find it, not a stick to mark it, only a little village half a mile away, but people have got off and are walking towards it so it's obviously meant to stop. Now we start again.

The day doesn't seem very long really considering there is nothing to do—everybody slept until 11 A.M.—four people in a carriage—quite comfy, at first the train seems noisy but it's quite possible afterwards to sleep really well and plenty of room. There is no restaurant car again. In future I shall go prepared with food for days! Kira says we must travel at least twice a year and see all Russia—besides Germany and England and America—and when it's quieter, China! Personally I'd rather see Japan but Kira says the Chinese are *really* nicer underneath! This morning we saw a procession of peasants going across the steppe in carts with wheat, going to sell it to the State—waving Red flags! Also there are a lot of State elevators for corn, huge buildings, and to my amazement *miles and miles* of sunflowers—grown for oil—they are very striking when in full bloom—but very dreary looking when dead—and thousands of melons growing like marrows—just anywhere where there's room!

We crossed one big river, The Book I think, but surely not spelt like that—not far from Roumania. Oh! Kira says you call it Bug in your atlases.

*Later.* We have just stopped for a quarter of an hour at a station where lots of peasants were selling milk, ten kopeks a glass—and pancakes with cream cheese in, and fancy bread also with cream cheese, and eggs, boiled hard, and maize—so now I don't mind not having brought anything. I've eaten enough for a week! We are *supposed* to get to Odessa about 3.30—but we have another two or three hours yet and it's 3.30 now. Just now we are climbing higher and have two engines but I suppose we must drop down to Odessa. There are two men from Odessa in our compartment—they say Odessa is very nice, and that about one hour's ride on the train brings one to some very nice “plages” for bathing: and



Alsace says Batum is really one of the nicest places in the world, so our little trip ought to be most enjoyable! Now I shall sleep my meal off!

4.30 P.M.

We have arrived at the station so called "Before-Odessa" and have seen Odessa in the distance over the *bluest* of seas—I begin to get excited.

HOTEL "PASSAGE,"  
(*pronounced French manner!*)

ODESSA, 8.30 P.M.

We actually arrived at Odessa about 5.15—and were greeted with a large red banner across the station—"Welcome to all for the Physical Congress"—and were given papers for our hotel, on the station. However when we arrived here Kira went up in smoke—because our room was one for four people. So he ups and says if they don't organise something immediately he will return—so of course after a lot of fuss and people dashing from the Institute and what not—we have a room to ourselves—about as big as the lovely one in the Ambassadors that night! but two weeny beds. However it's in quite a pleasant street and in the distance the sea.

Kira had to go off immediately to a meeting so I washed and changed and strolled forth all alone—expecting anything—I walked down to the harbour, bought some sweets at so much each!—looked through a telescope at the opposite coast for ten kopeks—bought some red carnations and here I am back waiting for Kira and then we shall eat—and sleep—and so to bed!

Odessa reminds me very much of Southport—quite a holiday atmosphere; and very nice gardens in odd places: espe-

cially beautiful in front of the station, and again in front of a large opera house.

N.B. I saw a real Cossack in full regalia on the train!

11.20 P.M.

Kira and I are now sitting in the restaurant of the Hotel London. It really is wonderful, in a courtyard in the open air, with shrubs and trees and a fountain in the middle—and coloured lights on each table—and a violin playing soft music—now Grieg—Solveig's Song—and we are eating Vieneschnitsel—and hopes of real cheese and coffee ice!

EDDIE.

It is really very, very nice and we are *so* happy.

KIRA.

## 2 I

ODESSA

*18th August. 10.45*

At present I am sitting, solitary like, in an antechamber to the holy of holies in the Institute at Odessa—there are no doors leading from this small room—all alcoves—and as I write I can hear Professors Tani and Franklin discoursing at length on the arrangements for the Conference which begins to-morrow. At the moment Kira's voice is loudest—it is a meeting for organisation—but I think the loudest talkers will achieve most!

By the way I have been given a ticket to this Congress. Can't you see Edna Alfredovna at a Scientific Congress in Russian and German!

A very strange and quiet old man brought me to sit on the balcony. It is wonderful looking towards the sea along

an avenue of trees—all the streets have trees like Lord Street, Southport. But the sea is blue, blue, and lovely-shaped buildings, all white, cluster on the slope to the sea, and occasional trees with thick shade . . . a place to dream of.

7 P.M.

To-day was completely perfect—after this meeting—we, six of us, four men and one other girl and myself—*i.e.* a Mr and Mrs Somebody from Tomsk whom Kira knew before, and Sasha Lipunsky and Peter Strelnikov and Kira and myself, rushed home and changed into bathing togs—and rushed and bought three *large* juicy melons—and then forty minutes on the train to a “plage”—and spent a wonderful day lazing on the sand and eating melons, and bathing and drinking “kvass,” rather like ginger beer but made from bread somehow!

Now we are home again after dining in the “House of Scientists.” It wasn’t too good, but it’s awful fun in a party. Kira is resting a little and then we are going to eat an ice. Isn’t it a blow—his nerve spots have come out again.

The most striking thing about the little beach we were on to-day was the scarcity of clothing of the women, although there was a notice to say no bathing without clothes. We were most respectable but are *very* brown.

Love from us both, “BUNNY.”

PS. This is a paper from the library—and it’s the only piece of paper I can lay hands on without disturbing the Committee meeting and that I daren’t do!

*10.20. 20th August 1930*

Darling Mariano,

Yesterday was spent entirely on the "Plage" eating melons! and getting so burnt that now it's agony to move! but after a little vaseline and some more bathing it will be alright. The thing which spoiled the day was not my burnt skin but losing my purse with twenty roubles in.

In the evening it was the formal opening of the Conference—so, clad in our best, Kira and I went with Sasha and Peter to the hall where it was held. It was once the Stock Exchange and therefore rather imposing. The hall was very large and if it hadn't been for the usual paraphernalia at the front, on the platform, it would have been a little gloomy, but with miles of red material draped artistically everywhere, and a photograph of Lenin in red, lit up all round the frame with red lights, it was at least cheering. Then for two hours there were great arc lights at work, on the said photograph, on the audience, on the speakers, on the committee and scenes in general, hundreds of flashlight photographs, tens of speeches of welcome in Russian or Ukrainian, and a *long* speech by Yoffey until at the end of four hours I thought I should go completely crazy with heat and boredom and agony! We left at 10.30, and then there was to be a concert of Ukrainian instruments. Had I known I should have stayed, but Kira purposely didn't tell me—and I do feel better for a good sleep. This morning we went to the Hotel Bristol for breakfast, where the restaurant has been reserved for members of the Conference. There was excellent food, butter which is for export only!—excellent omelettes—and cigarettes for Kira in plenty! And to my delight the cashier could speak English and seemed very pleased to

talk with someone English. She was in Cheltenham eighteen years ago for quite a long time!

Now I am sitting eating ices, as Kira has gone to more meetings—I would go to the “Plage” but I don’t know the number of the train!—and, like you and Lucie the first term you were in Paris, I don’t know enough language to ask! But I am wiser than you were, so I won’t go alone and get lost.

When I have wasted a little more time I shall go and sew in the hotel till Kira turns up for lunch!

BUNNY.

*22nd August*

Darling,

To-day was really a bit of a failure as regards our arrangements but quite interesting for me—I arranged to go to a “Plage” where Kira and I went before, and to wait indefinitely for him! However while I was eating my breakfast Natasha Simeonoff called for me, and I agreed to go to the “Plage” with her, and to collect Tamara Nimeonoff on the way as she also wanted to come. Then we all started for “Loozanivka” in spite of the fact that Natasha had left a note that she had gone with me to another “Plage”! Result we waited all day and Nikolai Nikolaitch and Kira went to the other “plage”! We had to wait in a queue for an hour and a half for the train back.

We arrived home too late for dinner and Kira had to go to a meeting immediately, so here I sit eating bread and water, like a naughty girl—and at 10 o’clock I shall go to supper whether Kira comes or not, since I have eaten nothing since 9 A.M. and it is now 7 P.M. Kira has a headache and is a little short-tempered, so the day was hardly a success—and also we are worrying about money because being wise children we only brought half our money with us so that we shall have something to live on when we get back—but as

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we had such a fuss with railway tickets and with boat tickets, and paid extra in order to get a first-class cabin completely to ourselves, we spent rather more than was intended. Now we have only just enough to get home and Kira doesn't like to have none to spare, so he wants to wire for some more. But again, we go on the boat the day after to-morrow, and there will not be time to receive it, and so we must arrange for it to be delivered somewhere here, to collect when we come back.

The guests of this Conference are Germans—and *very* charming, especially one Frau Simon. She is not a scientist—but came with her husband—and she speaks English perfectly—a lot of them do, quite well, so I am very happy!

I am very amused, everyone asks me, almost as soon as they meet me, whether I shall have a baby! And to-day three people told me I am like Kira and one that I am like Mary Stuart!

With love, BUNNY.

23

HOTEL "PASSAGE"

ODESSA

24th August 1930

Darling,

I write this while waiting for Kira to return from the last meeting of the Congress before going on the boat for the cruise to Crimea and Batum. We call at Sevastopol, Yalta, Novorossisk, Toapse, Gagri, Batum—I'll do you a map. The name of the boat is S.S. "Georgia," and Georgia is on the southern slope of the Caucasus next to Turkey and Armenia and Azerbaijan. Do you remember Miss C. at school reading us "Sohrab and Rustum"? and how Azerbaijan thrilled us?

Well, if we get high enough in the mountains above Batum we'll look down on it. NOW is my life thrilling? You must come to Russia, bambino.

Yesterday a lot of Germans arrived. Wasn't it clever of them to arrive for the fun and to miss the tedious meetings! However, as a result, we, that is all the Russians, have to give up our first-class cabins to the Germans and go second on the boat. But perhaps on the return journey we may manage to travel first class, as a lot of people are getting off at Batum, to stay for a holiday in the Caucasus; and others will get off at Crimea for a holiday there.

Yesterday I was on the Plage all day by myself till 9 P.M. I am losing my skin to-day.

Kira just rushed in, said "Give me five roubles, please," and rushed out again immediately.

However, our money matters are more or less settled. We got thirty-five roubles from Peter in change from the railway tickets, and the hotel was only twenty-one roubles instead of the forty we had reckoned on, so we're fifty roubles up, and have ordered and paid for our train tickets back to Kharkov!

## 24

BATUM

*27th August 1930*

Here we are due in Batum and very attractive it looks—but one place I hope we shall visit again, is Gagri. Quite small but beautiful. I met an American on board who says he will look you up in London and tell you about me and this trip. He's married and is looking after linotype machines in Europe. Perhaps he'll take you out to dinner. He's dying for Simpsons after Russian food! and after Simpsons he'll die for American food! Aren't we all parochial? But scenery

makes up for all. Go into the foothills and see the peaks above. Switzerland and Italy won't do after this.

EDDIE.

## 25

S.S. *Georgia*  
*In harbour at TOAPSE*  
28th August 1930

Darling Mariano,

When this letter will get posted I can't say—this is a mail boat but you know what boats are like. I get lazier every minute—but to-day the weather has been rough—and over-cast sky—not the glorious blue we have had—and I'm bored—because there's no one to talk to, with ease. Either they're German or Russian, and I'm not much good at either language, and all the Russians and Germans who could speak English well are still in Batum. But one good thing as a result, we have our first-class cabin back!

I feel blue inside and out to-day—but it's not the sea! I think I must have nerves about infants. I *can't* decide whether I really want one or not. At least—the mere woman in me of course says "Yes! and damn the consequences" but when I reason it out with myself of course "*No.*" There are so many children in Russia already—and it might be a feeble creature—and its ears might stick out—and if I wait a year and then perhaps we adopt one, I shall find a nice-looking one and a boy and everything will be more certain. And when I've argued like this then I wonder if it will really feel like mine? Help me out—only think of both sides—I'm strong enough, but the trouble is Kira isn't. One doctor suspected T.B., another said "*No.*" . . . Sorry! I meant to talk about this trip, only you see it's all about me.



Toapse is the last place on God's earth, not a thing to be bought-but rotten apples. And Crimea is just as badly off for food—Kharkov will seem Paradise again. Batum was very nice even in the rain and the waves were simply marvellous—and the sea like a hot bath. The old part of the town—tumble-down white houses that nearly touch each other across the narrow alleys like the Turkish part of Constantinople I'm told! anyway, pigs in the street! but the new part—wonderful tropical gardens, bananas and palms and magnolias and boulevards and Kira wants to go again in November. So do I.

To-morrow evening we reach Odessa again—stay the night, and if there are tickets, go home next day. Isn't it silly, Kira and I are homesick and we've only been away ten days from Kharkov.

While I remember, will you please send a pair of goloshes for Kira, size eight I suppose, and if it's possible a pair of those rubber boots for me with a zip up the front. Send them by air mail and we shall love you for evermore. Such things are completely necessary for the Russian winter—before the frost, it is mud and snow up to the knees in most streets in Kharkov I'm told—and goloshes almost impossible to buy at all. Peasants used to go barefoot wrapped in old rags and straw, now more people want boots and goloshes and they've all got to be made, millions of pairs—so they are terribly short—so don't forget to send them.

I'm dying for some tea—will see if there's a queue now.

*29th August*

Horrible disillusion—I thought we got to Odessa to-day when I woke up—but it's to-morrow. Now we're getting to Crimea again—Yalta this evening, glorious coast, like Monte Carlo a bit, and the weather begins to improve, and although Kira thinks he feels a bit sea-sick I think it's nerves again because the sea is fairly calm and when it was really rough

two days ago he was very gay—now he is lying down in order to speak with Yoffey at 10.30.

YOUR BUNNY.

## 26

ODESSA *again*.  
Once the "HOTEL BRISTOL"  
now "KRASNIA," *red!*

I find I didn't post the card from Batum and so I suppose the American will arrive without warning, if at all! I shall get Kira to finish this—now we're going home I feel quite happy.

BUNNY.

I couldn't find any nice postcards in Crimea—or anything to eat!

Now we are just starting for Kharkov. We are really homesick and are going back with pleasure. We hope that we shall find some letters from you in Kharkov. The cruise was really very nice.

KIRA.

## 27

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2  
3rd September 1930

Dearest,

You know I couldn't have believed I'd be homesick for this little flat. All the same last night was miserable! Did I

tell you when we were with Igor and Marina in Leningrad I was positively *horrified* to find *bugs*!—real genuine bugs—in the bedroom. At first I didn't know what they were—now I certainly do! On the boat in the Black Sea a very nice little man edited a humorous newspaper "with plenty of jokes about bug hunting as a new sport for the people of the Western World." On that boat it was quite understandable, three thousand people mostly third class, instead of one thousand, so that a few bugs were bound to be found even in first-class cabins. In our first hotel at Odessa, Hotel Passage, there were none, but coming back, we stayed at the Hotel Bristol, I beg its pardon, the Krasnia—and there Kira and I slept on the floor one night; the couch and chairs the second night; because of the bugs.

But when we come home and find about two dozen in our own bedroom it's a bit thick! But it's the result of peasants sleeping in the bottom flat, and in Boris's flat while the foundations of the workers' block were being laid. Now they creep into our flat through cracks which have appeared in the floor. I feel positively sick about it—but it isn't our fault—every day I most *meticulously* sweep every room, especially the bedroom—I unmake the bed and sweep the divans with a brush dipped in petrol—but still they're there—perhaps you can advise something? There's no such thing as Keatings in Russia. But to cheer myself up I must say they all looked very flat and ill-fed last night—perhaps after last night's slaughter they'll disappear though they're beastly faithful!

So the people in your Ebury Street Post Office are suspicious about so much correspondence with Russia! Here everyone is jealous of mine from England. Even Luba would like some. Luba is Kira's sister-in-law—Feydya is his eldest brother—the one he doesn't like so much, but who was very nice to me. Kira objects to his punctilious manner and his

habit of still kissing ladies' hands. It is pre-revolutionary. Luba isn't as young as she looks, thirty something—and quite sophisticated.

We must take some more photographs of this flat—but I'm afraid they'll still be the same chairs because there is no furniture to be bought at present—and I do so *long* for an armchair—but we shan't have one for *years*. As for making some—I haven't seen any goat skin—and *I* couldn't make one from pine-trees. Kira pounced on the new books—he's read *Little Novels* in Russian—and is surprised to find it in English as he says they're "awful" for English people, language or morals? As you say "away goes work for books"—but to-day—I made some scones and some chocolate buns, with cocoa.

*4th September*

I proceed to the strains of a funeral march—a funeral of someone with enough money to afford a band! Funerals are very strange affairs. They take place any hour of the day but mostly about 5 P.M. and the coffin is put in a very primitive-looking hearse painted red and silver—drawn by two horses *covered* with red net to the ground—and led by a man in a red coat, also down to the ground, the coat I mean! The coffin of course is *red* and after this walk the mourners—and often quite undistinguishable among the crowd which always follows this "exquisite" brass band. I may be wrong but it always seems to me that they play some Russian folk-songs at a suitable pace! I've never discovered where they go with the coffin, or where they start from—but apart from the faces of mourners it isn't a bit tragic. Not like the black coaches and white flowers of England.

To-day is a red-letter day, for now Kira is watching twenty men attempt to get his pet child, a new transformer, through the main doors into the Institute—as the doors are too narrow

and the transformer weighs two or three tons, I am not allowed to watch the proceedings on account of the bluish tinge to the atmosphere!

You make me jealous about films. Although here I am in this most wonderful country of films, I haven't seen a decent one yet. *Lenidya* (Earth) came to Odessa after we left. As for talkies, there's not one in Russia. They tell me the first Five-Year Plan cannot include such expensive things as Western talkies, the machinery would have to be imported. The cinemas in Russia generally are poor. They show all the old films from the West [again a question of expense of importing new films], and all the old Russian ones, even back to *The Waiter's Daughter*. You have to wait hours in queues, and finally sit on a wooden form in a miserable hall for hours while the various "Parts" finish and begin. It is exactly like Lucie's description of the films at Evian-les-Bains in twenty-four. Is England the only comfortable place in the world?

I'm glad you saw *Faust* again with Lucie and Mr Street. There was a friend of Kira's at the Conference—he travelled on the boat with us. He reminded me of Lucie's father except that he had the most abominable nails. You say that everyone's views on Socialism differ—would you believe that in U.S.S.R.—where one supposes all will be equal—that pounds and pounds must be spent on manicures to let the world at large know that one doesn't do manual labour! There are just as many snobs in Russia it seems to me as anywhere else—perhaps the manicured ones are ex-Royalists at heart whatever they profess! I shall never have my nails half an inch long—or painted red.

How amusing it is to know nothing about the outside world. I've completely forgotten about Royal families—since I came to Russia I have only heard that there is some war-like trouble between China and England and America, perhaps France—not a word about India, and a few smirks about

Egypt—please enlighten me—thumb-nail sketches of the general situation in world politics! Anyhow I hope this Royal infant will be like the little Duchess—she's a dear.\*

It seems very cold in Kharkov after Odessa but I suppose it's just a cold spell, because winter doesn't begin here as early as this.

Of course Odessa is quite a goodish way south of Kharkov. And it seems still further, travelling by a train which is scheduled to arrive at 9 A.M. and doesn't do so till 5 P.M. But time doesn't matter, so who cares.

You might send me some *cheap* editions of Galsworthy—they are very popular in Russia—and I want to read them *in* Russian—but it will help considerably if I have an English version. "Geebie" S. is delicious and Russians love him.

Kira *really* does intend to write to you about Russia and the Five-Year Plans but I'm sure it won't be for ages, because he must begin work and lectures soon, and is very busy preparing.

Just now there's agitation in camp—for although the Institute has a lot of money banked, it is impossible to get notes from the bank—as all the money is being given to peasants for their corn—and if any more notes are made the value will decrease—so nobody knows what will happen—though of course we're all glad it's the best harvest for ten years.

Now I must hie me down to the Restaurant to dinner—it's 6.30—and as we're supposed to be there at 6 P.M. I shan't be surprised to find none left.

Love from EDDIE.

PS. I was right. There was no dinner so I'm frying eggs and potatoes!

\* [The little Duchess is now the Princess Elizabeth and the Royal infant, Princess Margaret Rose.]

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

5th September 1930

Darlingest,

The Hautermanns are here and love our flat. We had a binge and spent our last rouble on wine, because they got married in the Caucasus a week ago! Nobody can read their certificate because it's in "Georgian!" She was in an American College two years I think, teaching, and told us lots of tales—quite a different view of Americans from the one I had before.

Just now Kira is busy getting his transformer into position. They actually got it into his laboratory, though they were afraid at first that the stairs would collapse before they got it up. It weighs tons and it costs a million.

Oh, darling—I've *finished* your sleeve and pressed it and it looks quite thrilling. I think you'd better design the bands for collars and cuffs as you want them—and send them to me—I have more time than you. Oh God! why ever did I come here—it's such a long way away—and to-day I feel like a bird in a cage—I think and think how I can come and see you—but there doesn't seem any way—because as yet I have no passport—and I can't make any arrangements myself—and Kiwi would be so upset if he knew how homesick I am and anyhow we've got no money these days. Boris owes us forty roubles and we owe fifty to someone else. Boris Ivanovitch went to the Bank at 6.30 this morning to take his place in the queue—our Boris replaced him at 8 A.M.—but he won't get a turn until two or three this afternoon—and Boris Ivanovitch went the other day for twenty pounds for himself and got five pounds! and the Institute can't get any to pay us. I know the harvest must be paid for and it is a good thing that it's such a fine one, but?

It's so cold here after Odessa—it's like December in England though it's still only September, and we have tons of clothes but are still cold—and there's very little coal—so we can't have fires every day—and central heating hasn't begun yet—and the food is rotten—we're trying to get a better cook for our communal kitchen on the ground floor of our block and to pitch Marie Ivanovna out—because although we pay two roubles a day each—and there must be thirty of us: sixty roubles; we get a cup of cold milk and black bread for lunch!—watery soup, plain boiled potatoes and a weeny piece of meat for dinner—followed by a rotten pear or two. Everybody complains they're hungry all day—but Marie Ivanovna must be making a pretty penny out of us all. When Obreimov comes back there'll be more food because he demands an account of her expenditure. But even then she "rooks" us. There's the Russian peasant for you—like our Natasha.

I forgot to tell you that Odessa is to be our second home—Kira has been invited to become "Consultante" at the Institute in Odessa, like Kapitza is for Kharkov, and it will mean going two or three times a year and for two months in the summer, and we shall have a flat there, and I shall bathe and get brown while Kira works.

Also he was elected to be on the Central Committee for the reorganisation of Physics and Physical Institutes in Russia! Yoffey is head of the Committee and it plans all the scientific work of Russia. Isn't it thrilling? Such a country of promise and yet I'm plain homesick for England.

Your morbid EDDIE.

[Letter 29 begins the series which describe Russian difficulties in the winter 1930-31. These difficulties, about which Kira had warned Eddie in England, had been fully foreseen by the Soviet Government. They were an inherent part of the first Five-Year Plan, which Plan, together with the succeeding Five-Year Plans, had such amazing success in



transforming Russia from a feudal country of semi-starving peasants into a socialistic state, self-supporting in industry and agriculture. Because of these Plans the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics withstood the might of Germany.

But the Plans were entered into with the knowledge that the whole population must first accept a low standard of living, enduring cold, hunger and general shortage of commodities while the corn and dairy products, which they might have enjoyed themselves, were bought up by the Government and exported, to pay for the heavy machinery and metal then being imported to establish the basic industries of the U.S.S.R.

The Government was paying for the electrification of the whole of Russia—and for the building of countless factories, such as the Tractorstroy at Kharkov, and for the blocks of flats for the scientific workers, Russian and foreign, on whose work depended the success of the national scheme. It is to be noticed that the Soviet Government, very short of money, put first things strictly first, so that buildings and equipment were put before the payment of personnel. This was done in hard but realistic Russian fashion, for personnel might work without pay, but they could not work without equipment.]

## 29

KHARKOV

*11th September*

Darling,

You seem to have a passion for inquiring about Russian trains!—and mostly the scathing “bits” you send are true. I can’t imagine how Kira can believe, and he really does, that Russian trains are the world’s best. All my experiences in

trains here have not endeared them to me—though even we must admit it's wonderful to be able to travel from Lenin-grad to the Black Sea, thousands of miles—four nights in the same train—for about five pounds.

When I say first class it doesn't mean first class as in England, really it is "Soft Class." There are four classes, if one can call them "classes" in Socialistic Russia! The best mode of travel is "International," only used, that is only allowed to be used, by foreigners through the Intourist Bureaus. It is also used however by "Link," that is the Central Committee of Government like our members of Parliament, and also by the Central Committee of Trade Unions who are allowed to travel free of charge as do English M.P.s when on duty.

Then comes the so-called "Soft" class—very much used, especially on long distances. The difference between "Soft" and International is that in the latter the compartment is for two people only and "Soft" is for four, the padded backs of the seat can be raised to make a second bed on top so that it is like sleeping in bunks in a ship. Unfortunately once the top bed is raised it generally remains so, for everyone sleeps in the train the most part of the day and if you are on the top deck it's rather difficult to sit on the bottom seat when some one is sleeping with all their luggage round them! However it is easy for us travelling together—because I don't mind if Kira comes and sits on my feet or vice versa!

Afterwards comes third class with "Placecarte" which allows you to have a wooden bench in a "pen"—there's no other word suitable, it really can't be called carriage, when in it there are about forty wooden benches—the bottom ones for sitting and the top ones for sleeping. One must pay more for a "Placecarte" though it is in the same wagon as the third *without* sleeping accommodation. Perhaps it will give you some idea if I say from Kharkov to Odessa "Soft" class is about twenty-five roubles—third with "Placecarte" is about

twenty roubles and without is thirteen roubles odd—no idea what International is—but you can see from that, it is very well worth while to pay the extra five roubles and travel “Soft” with three other people—than to pay twenty, and travel with perhaps hundreds, because the number of people allowed into a third-class carriage is not limited or so it seems to me.

Then there is the question of tickets—in the summer it is really a problem because the whole of Russia seems to go to the seaside one way or the other, that is, south to the Black Sea, or north to the Baltic—and sometimes it is necessary to wait days for a ticket—and *always* it is necessary to *book* them five days beforehand. To do this you must go to the station—find a porter—give him money for the kind of ticket you want and all details—get a receipt from him with his number on—give him, or promise him, a handsome tip!—and go home. In five days you go with all your luggage—or without if you go before train time—and collar your porter with or without tickets. If he has got a ticket but not the class you ordered he will give you the change!—and you either start or don’t start at the appointed time—and arrive? Kira is constantly reminding me that our train from Leningrad to Khar’kov was only ten minutes late after two days’ journey! He *doesn’t* mention the hours late from Odessa!

You ask me about food. Of course there are the Co-operative Shops, two kinds, the big Co-operatives where you must have tickets and the smaller ones where tickets are not necessary. To join a Co-operative is a very long business, we are in process of joining! You must produce all sorts of papers to start with—and after a little wangling you will get cards for bread and sugar—then after a long period we must pay, I forget how many roubles, sixty I think, anyhow twenty roubles at a time for Kira—and I have to pay about one sixth or one quarter of this—and every successive member of the family pays a smaller proportion of the householder’s sum!

Anyhow when you have your tickets—all you must do is to go to the Co-operative *early* in the morning and stand in a queue and with tickets you get your pound or two pounds of bread and your pint or so of milk—butter, eggs, all very cheaply—but there's the eternal queue.

In the small Co-operatives you may not buy as *much* as you like—but it's still cheap—and of course here you cannot buy things which are rationed as strictly as bread, butter, eggs, sugar. Only vegetables and tea—cocoa—scent as much as you like—wine—cream cheese—soda—biscuits—sweets—olives, etc. etc. The kiosks vary—some sell sweets—some fruit or newspapers and so on. The mineral water is all natural gaseous stuff—sometimes inclined to be salty—rather like Vichy water—anyhow there are hundreds and hundreds of kiosks in the summer where one can drink a glass or a bottle for a few kopeks and on hot days, more queues, all drinking. After this there are the kiosks belonging to private people. There you may buy sweets at exorbitant prices, butter, vegetables, cakes and so on; but the kiosks are a last resort because all their goods have been bought in Co-operatives or on the market at 5 A.M. and are for re-sale only at three or or four times the original price.

Finally of course come the peasants, on the market and in the street. I understand that to sell this way they must have a licence, but it's obvious that they haven't got one—for *occasionally* the police come round to inspect and it's a great joke to see all the old peasants sneaking off with their baskets till he's gone. On the market, with money, you can buy almost anything—even to flour, which is strictly prohibited. Also soap—but you must go to a certain corner of the market where *everybody* appears to be walking round—and here you can whisper to peasants and ask if there's any soap, and after suspicious glances she or he may root in their basket and bring out a cake or two cakes of soap—of course they ask fabulous prices but it's the only place where it may be bought, so you

pay. Sugar and cotton for sewing can also be bought in this corner—but *whatever* you buy on the market, with the exception of the Co-operative stalls, you must pay for dearly. Surely it's the Russian peasants' paradise. But not private shopkeepers. I heard yesterday they must pay a seven-thousand rouble tax on their profits in future.

The Central Market in Kharkov is really priceless. You never in all your life saw such junk as is to be sold, laid out on second-hand shawls on the ground—and heaps of odd people—selling perhaps an old coat—or a new pair of shoes for twice their value—an old hat—a scarf—a pair of goloshes—just odd things. But one has to be very sharp—for these “odd” people are always moving and you have to walk with them to ask how much their goods are. Boris and I were once asked how much our soap was.

Then there are clothes—I really haven't much idea about these—it always seems to me that there is a queue outside such shops—but every now and then a little batch of clothes comes to the Institute—and all members of the Co-operative are told what there is and if they like to buy they may be lucky. As there are about fifty members in this Institute and as only fourteen things, such as one suit, one costume, one coat, three pairs trousers, etc., came, very few people got what they wanted.

Just this last week, and evidently for a little longer, the main shortage is money—*with* it one can do a reasonable amount—but without it life does indeed seem harder. But it's very strange, that although for the last week we've been often hungry and cold, it doesn't seem to damp our spirits much. Now and again when I'm *very* hungry, or very cold, I feel blue and miserable, but it doesn't last long—and to-day really hasn't been a very successful day in the food line and yet I feel just contented and ready to tell you about it all without beginning to worry.

Our meals for the last three days:

Breakfast—for me—milk and bread every day, either hot or cold—and for variety, sometimes together, sometimes separately. KIRA—one egg, dry bread, milk; bread and butter, milk; dry bread, milk.

Lunch—first day—one plate watery vegetable soup each; second day—one plate milk pudding without sugar each; third day—three boiled potatoes, two tomatoes raw, a quarter of a herring.

Dinner—first day—one plate watery soup, boiled potatoes, and fish with tomato<sup>7</sup> sauce; second day—one plate watery soup, boiled potatoes and two small cutlets; third day—one plate watery soup, one plate milk pudding without sugar.

For variety and cheeriness Kiwi and I sometimes drink tea and eat a piece of dry bread at four o'clock and again at night—but the tea has run out and with the money shortage we can't buy any more—so to-night I have made two little cornflour moulds with milk and water and we shall drink tea, that is boiling water poured over old leaves. I haven't told Mother and Father that it's so bad, so please keep it to yourself—it will be all right again in a week or so and we shall be able to buy things even on the market.

I'm sure it's all very good for me. I realise what a lot of good things I had in life before and I shall appreciate them when I'm home again.

Good night.

EDDIE.

PS. Boris heard in the bank to-day that there will be money again after October 1st. I shall really have a girlish figure by then. September is the end of the financial year and it appears that, as in other things, they miscalculated and so with all these factories and houses and what-nots going up the State is having to pay out more than it has got.

15th September

Soon we shall belong to the Co-operative. After some permit has been passed by the Government, members of our Institute may belong to the first category—which is for workers only. But as our Institute is connected with factories, because it makes the researches on which factory work must depend, and because engineers attached to a factory have this privilege, it is hoped we shall also. In that case our ration will increase by almost twice as much. Four pounds of sugar a month each, instead of two and so on.\*

Kira has just gone to a meeting, so I'm going into Boris's flat to sit with Mira *in spite of* shrieking children, Andrusha is one—Juksha the other, in the hope she'll give me a sweet to eat. Just now I only want enough money to buy a few sweets.

Won't the Kapitzas be annoyed at finding there's no money here? We hear they have arrived in Leningrad—and will come here about the twenty-fifth.

BUNNY.

PS. If the Five-Year Plan fails it will be *entirely* due to bad organisation. There are some marvellous ideas knocking about. Rather an ingenious combination over potatoes. About a fortnight ago, they were very cheap, six kopeks per kilo—a kilo is two and a half pounds—so there were notices in all the Co-operatives: "Buy vegetables for the winter—large quantities conveyed to your homes, etc. etc. *Pay a subscription to the State loan and ensure a good supply of vegetables for the winter.*"

Of course with them being so cheap, people still waited, without paying the subscription. As a result—the State which *really* is short of money and wants to accelerate this "loan" business to help them over the next month, withdrew all potatoes and vegetables. Now they can only be bought at two

roubles for three kilos and rotten ones at that—from private people.

I take it, everybody will immediately pay subscriptions and get the potatoes later.

Q.E.D. don't you think?

There are *so many* potatoes in Russia that it's completely impossible to have a shortage—except an *intentional* one.

\* [The Russian ideas of food allocation that sounded so odd to English ears in 1930 seemed much less so in 1940. When rationing was instituted in England it was decided also that heavy manual labourers should be given twice the meat ration allowed to anyone else. After the big blitzes, this privilege was extended to the Civil Defence Heavy Rescue Workers. In a similar manner, during harvest-time the English farmers were allowed a greatly increased cheese ration.]

19th September

Sixteen aeroplanes are out doing stunts this morning—  
aeronautics seem really advanced in Kharkov. I never saw so many at home.

You talk about Lena Goldfields—yesterday I felt so “keyed up” about receiving your cuttings, that I could have written a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* about as scathing as their “Lesson in Soviet Honesty.” Does England really think we shall pay twelve millions smiling and take it as a stern lesson in honesty. Fools—we’ve got no money anyhow—and shall have none for ages if the Government must fork out such a sum.

Anyhow this is the story of three different people and they all agree, although told to me independently. The Lena Goldfields Co. were working in the time of Russia proper. After the revolution, machines were destroyed, etc., and the workings had to be stopped. Later the Soviet Government gave a concession to the Company to begin working again in



two metals. But after a time, these people started to produce a third metal—and exploited it for about a year all unbeknown to the Russians. Also—they refused to pay dividends—or tax or something that they legally should have paid owing to *lack* of money. The Government overlooked this but was furious when it discovered that all the time they'd been making a nice little pile out of a metal that they'd had no permission to produce—so of course the agreement was broken—and now, nice fat juicy England kicks up a fuss—and tries to decide by arbitration. Not only this—but instead of the committee being of three sides as it legally should be, one from England, one from Russia, and one from a neutral state—Russia is left out altogether and naturally England wins. Shucks.

You talk about England feeling bitter—what do we feel? However I'm not going to quarrel with *you* about it—only it doesn't seem quite fair.

The Pushkinskaja will be wonderful—like a billiard table—when the gigantic Bulldozer, an American machine, has made it. Hope the winter won't spoil it. Skaja means Square—but it's also used for a very wide street like the Champs-Élysées in Paris. I wish you could see these new streets being laid out in Kharkov. Really, you would admire our Kharkov.

Now I must go down to lunch—in spite of lack of funds, the new Manageress, who talks French to me, has certainly improved the food.

*Half an hour later*

We have just had a little revolution in the kitchen—our old maid Marie Ivanovna refuses to obey the new Manageress—suppose it's not profitable enough.

In half an hour I'm going to take Jukesha to the "Zoo Garden." It's very good for a town the size of Kharkov—and there are lovely gardens so I shall sit and read for half an hour or so while he amuses himself with "les animaux."

I'm not taking Andrusha, it's too far—and I can't manage two little things and Jukesha doesn't mind if I don't understand very well.

Kira asked me to ask you if you could send the *Observer* for him to read. He has a very high opinion of that paper. He's very angry to-day, poor thing—he can't find anybody to do anything and he can't get any tools to fix his really beautiful "toys," all shining gold and silver.

The article about the miners in the Donetz Basin is only too true—half the miners have left, so now only factories may have coal—shan't we be cold in a Russian winter?

To think that in twelve months I shall be in England!

Your BUNNY.

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21st September

Darling,

Yesterday we had a wire from Maurice Dobb from Cambridge, to say he is coming to Kharkov to-day and would like to see us both—arriving 9 A.M. from Rostov-on-Don, but in spite of the fact that I awoke at 8 A.M. and gave Kira his "brekker" immediately, he didn't manage to get off to the station in time; so now we're both sitting rather gloomily wondering if Dobb will bother to come here, as we didn't meet him. I feel terribly flat—having worked like a slave to make the flat all bright and shining. Still it all helps to keep the bugs away.

Last night Boris, Kira and I went to a variety concert in a garden off the Sumskaia—and there was quite an ingenious, and almost American, jazz band from Leningrad, "djaz" in Russian. The conductor was awfully funny but they played

a really beautiful parody of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Hymn to the Sun."

If this reaches you in time for your birthday, I wish you happy and so does Kira. We will send some small thing by Ania Kapitza.

With love, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV

21st September 1930. 4 P.M.

Darling,

Dobb hasn't appeared and Kira looks positively *sweetly* guilty at not going to the station. What fools are people in love—but you know Kira and I've been married seven months—and we haven't quarrelled once since we came into *this* flat—and really we seem to understand one another a bit better now in spite of our varying moods and tempers.

You ask can't we *both* come next year—the difficulty\* about Kira and me travelling together *out* of Russia is that the Government are afraid we won't come back—so one has to stay as a sort of hostage—but I'm sure this will be remedied in time and we shall both appear on your doorstep hand in hand.

Much love, BUNNY.

24th September. 10.30 P.M.

I am very excited about working in the laboratory with Kira. It's difficult for me to believe I'm a professor's wife. Kira has just been given a professorship, two hundred and fifty roubles extra. But if you could see me covering bottles

of all sizes with silver paper—and fixing glass tubes in the top with corks of adhesive plaster, you'd be terribly impressed—especially since they *really act* as electrical condensers. I've seen them! And there's a tremendous *spark and bang*. Isn't that a scientific description?

The Kapitzas will soon be here.

Dobb arrived about 5 P.M., trains again, his train due at 9 A.M. arrived 1 P.M. He and Kira decided it's the rotten coal they're having to use.

Dobb remembered meeting you and says he must see your Council flats.

If you can get a copy of the *Daily Worker* for September 13th Dobb wrote an article on Russia in it, front page.

I'm a bit tired after a day of bottles. So will stop.

Love, BUNNY.

\* [The cause of the difficulty was that the Soviet Government had no wish to lose any more of its leading scientists. Some who had crossed the frontier with their wives had failed to return for the simple reason that they found conditions in Russia at that date were much worse than anywhere else in Europe. Scientists were essential to the success of the Five-Year Plan. To prevent recurrence they kept one of each couple as surety for the return of the other.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

8th October 1930

Darling,

The Kapitzas have come. Yesterday's letter from you was simply delicious. Ania and I are still cackling over little bits

like your statement that my constant refrain "The Kapitzas are coming," was just like the song "The Campbells are Coming." Ania and I are doing things all day, and she really is a delightful creature. The other day we went a *long* walk and took our lunch with us, right away from Kharkov. When you arrive I'd like to go walking with you over the steppe and through quaint little villages where the main street is one wide cart track—*impassable* in winter. The last two days we have been to the Market and Ania has bought *lots and lots* of little clay toys like she showed us in Cambridge, only *all red*, and heaps of jugs and jars—beautiful—and I really wanted to buy a lot for you, but the Institute hasn't paid us yet—we *hope* to-day—but they've been saying "to-morrow" for a week. When Ania first came, we had about forty roubles, but of course it soon went, because Boris almost lived with us the first days—and there were five of us to breakfast, tea and supper, and we've decided a rouble is only worth about threepence now—so for a week we have all been living on the Kapitzas. I minded terribly at first, but they're so nice about it, and of course it isn't our fault that there's no money, so now I don't mind so terribly and if we get paid, the last day or two we shall be able to entertain them properly. Ania and I found a shop where they sell only hand-made Ukrainian carpets and curtains and materials—just now it is shut—but when it is open again I will try and buy something and send it.

Yesterday Ania drew my portrait—simply wonderful—Kira *loves* it and Ania has "sort of" lent it, she says, until we're divorced! Everybody thinks it's lovely, not *me*, the portrait. She is going to cut Kira's hand out of the unfinished portrait of him, which she has at Cambridge, and send it. Did you see it? Such a lovely hand; and to-day Mrs Obreimov and Mr Kondrasheuka are coming to tea, and we are going to buy cakes this afternoon, and to-morrow we're go-

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ing to another market, so I shall know quite a lot of Khar-kov by the time Ania goes—more than Kiwi.

Oh, I must tell you—it's been so cold the last day or two that Kiwi decided he would make a radiator. The first one he made was so minute we just shrieked with mirth—it was smaller than a toaster and really the temperature of the room seemed to get lower. So he made another—it's not beautiful, but more effective—and as we still don't pay for electricity we have it on all day and night.

Kira says he'll take a photo of my portrait—would you like a print?—it will probably fade away so you needn't be afraid. I rather feared the photos we sent you would fade, but it's the best we could do with Russian products.

9th October

I have at last seen a normal film in Russia. Anti-religious but not anti-true religion. They attack the wealthy, complacent, decadent, comfort-loving thing that established religion often becomes, like the Pharisees of old whom Christ despised. Look at it that way and this propaganda becomes really good comedy. As Ania says, it is so clever and right the way they poke fun—not at God Himself, but at the rich priests. The Roman Catholics would never let it be shown in England, perhaps the Protestants would not, either—but I can tell you bits. It is called *The Fête of St Yorgan*, a Saint who apparently lived a holy life, like Christ, only he got married to a pure and simple maiden—and immediately after was taken away by some rich people and crucified. While the soldiers on guard played cards, an angel came and took Yorgan from the cross and he disappeared, but his cloak fell on the ground. The captain of the guard threw it on the cross with the point of his sword, whereupon a cross appeared on the material. That is the legend, but you've no idea how comic it can be made—two fat luscious priests, bishops I im-

agine, wished to make a film of the life of St Yorgan to show at the feast of St Yorgan. It was really very well made—and the photography excellent—the priests saw the making and then saw it on the “silver sheet,” but they didn’t hear the beautiful angel swear lustily at the men who held the wires which supported her descent to the cross, and they pretended not to see a party of holiday-makers in a boat who butted into one corner of the film when St Yorgan was walking on the water. Then came the eve of the feast of St Yorgan, when the film was to be shown. That morning two jail birds escaped from prison. They rushed in a car to the station—and found a train going to the feast of St Yorgan, as a train in Europe might be going to Lourdes, and they decided to go too. They got on the train, after stealing a man’s bag while being blessed by a priest, were discovered and locked in their carriage by the police. They escaped through the lavatory into a carriage where two nuns slept, stole the nuns’ clothes and walked out of the train at the next stop. After several other adventures they at last got an imprint of the key opening the chapel of St Yorgan, and the first thief entered. But the other, who had now acquired crutches, hoping in this way to escape police notice, was seen and recognised. He fled with his crutches under his arm, leaving the first thief locked in the Chapel. This man had the wit to dress himself in the robes of the Saint. Next morning the priest led a vast procession of worshippers and cripples, including the second thief hobbling on his crutches, to the door of the Chapel. A priest opened it and in a loud voice called out “St Yorgan, where are you?” You should have seen the immense astonishment on the priest’s face when he heard the thief’s voice “I am here.” However he controlled himself and went on “Come to your people, etc. etc.” The flight of all these fat priests was really lovely, when a man very like the real St Yorgan, appeared in flowing robes. All the crowd bowed believing. Then the fat priests, fearing for their lost reve-

nues, returned and suggested that the Saint work a miracle to prove himself the real Saint Yorgan. Horror on the afore-said saint's face—especially as all the cripples rushed to his feet in a very menacing manner. Then the would-be saint recognised his friend with the crutches and his relief was apparent. Commanding space, he looked at the cripple who remained nearest to him, and said "Friend, carry your crutches and walk." Of course the cripple miraculously recovered. The grand finale was an awful oil painting of the thief as a saint, to which thousands of peasants were bowing.

Kira is better and I've had a change from bottles in the laboratory. I've been winding wire for a transformer, but it was very tedious and made my eyes ache, and after about one and a half hours I did it very badly, so Kira finished it.

*10th October*

We had a wonderful farewell dinner off duck yesterday, the Obreimovs, Ania Kapitza, Peter Kapitza, Kira and me. Of course it was really the Kapitzas who did it. I hope we shall have money next time they come, for they came as our guests and then had to feed us. We have no money yet, we've had only fifty roubles since September 2nd. Now that Ania's gone, we shall proceed to starve again.

You'd better ask Ania about my Russian—I can't tell what it's really like. Certainly my vocabulary is a few naughty words bigger since the Kapitzas arrived. Peter Kapitza has been given a Professorship at Cambridge at last, isn't it fine?

He is a very amusing man and taught me one naughty word of Russian a day. Kira was horrified. Isn't he sweet?

I'm writing this while waiting for Kira's cocoa to boil—some that Ania left—then I'm going to bed. I did seventeen bottles to-day; more than the two professional assistants together. Then after listening to Kira's new transformer that I helped to make, I spring-cleaned the beds for bugs. How glad I am that sea lice don't exist, I'm sure they'd flourish



in Russia and then what price Crimea holiday? Which joke reminds me that Kira burst out one day "Yes, but why doesn't Marian send some Keats?" I said he was such a Russian that he'd even expect bugs on a Grecian urn.

My scrap-book is becoming quite unique with the articles you send on Russia. What was the one in the *Week-end Review*? "Is Russia a Market or a Menace?"

Before she went, Ania bought some beautiful little books—almost without words—for children, done in simply lovely colours. Would you like a few when we're rich again? Russia has beautiful books since the Revolution—so modern. And so many.

Having made cocoa for Kira, I had some myself. It's very good with dry biscuits. It was our supper.

Good night.

EGGU.

11th October

Boris's wife has left him for two or three days to go and look after the Mother of her second husband, who is fifty and is going to have a baby and is very ill. So I'm helping him with Andrusha and Jukesha—perhaps that's why I'm blue—that, and not being able to pay for the laundry to-day.

Kira is busy calculating with all his bosom cronies in the kitchen near the stove, it's too cold anywhere else. I've finished three of the books you sent, but not *The World of William Clissold*. I am sending you two cuttings—one to give you the impression I have of Russia and the second the picture "Red Harvest." Hasn't the Johnny on top of the hay-cart got a feeling of Well Being?

But really it is a pity things aren't organised better. A lot of wheat is rotting in the fields because there isn't enough room to store it or enough machines to thrash it, though that may be right next year. The same in the fisheries, there is a particularly good harvest, but when the fishermen went to the authorities to say they were sending it, they were told

to hold it up, as there isn't anywhere to store it yet! and then the second answer was "Sell fish and eat caviare"—this to peasant fishermen, when caviare is so valuable.

Love from your dispirited BUNNY.

12th October

Great astonishment to find it's Sunday. Would you miss days of the week, if you didn't have them? We have five days but not names.

Yesterday was a beastly day, everything seemed to go wrong. When Kira had gone to the laboratory I fell asleep, and woke up at 11.30 with a thick head, to find that without any warning the dining-room had closed owing to lack of funds—and as we had nothing but milk, and not much of that, it seemed a pretty dismal prospect. However, Mrs Obreimov—if I mention Katya it's Mrs Obreimov—called on me and asked us to go to dinner. Now as I knew Obreimov was going to offer to lend Kira five roubles, I thought I'd better ask him first—but he refused both the invitation and the money. Then Mrs Obreimov asked me to go shopping, and on returning gave me a small chicken which she said I must cook without telling Kira. Unfortunately Obreimov came in and said I *must* persuade Kiwi to come to dinner. Forthwith I went to the library and we had a nice little scene—because Kiwi thinks if the Government can afford to spend thousands on apparatus for the Institute they can afford to pay him what he earns—and he dislikes the idea of accepting the least bit of help from anyone. However as I had already got the chicken at home I said we were bound to accept the invitation to dine, in order to be able to return the chicken. As I washed up the Obreimovs' dishes for two days, I reckon I earned my dinner—filthy dishes in cold water and no soap. Finally I discovered that Kira was suffering with his tummy and didn't really want to eat—but you know

he's getting a positive scarecrow—and I'm afraid he'll disappear.

To-day is wonderful—or will be—all white mist everywhere, later the sun will shine brilliantly and all seem gay. Nobody knows if the dining-room will be open. But I can fry some potatoes for lunch—and boil some for dinner, so we shan't starve and we got some bread yesterday, and every day we have milk. I imagine if Kira made a scene he could get some money, but I agree money is a beastly thing to make scenes about. The other day he got ten roubles—spent it *all* on cigarettes. At first I was rather surprised, but after all, ten roubles doesn't go far, and Kira really can't exist without cigarettes, so I said nothing. Nothing matters somehow.

Now I must go to the laboratory—Kira wakened me with a beautiful humming this morning—discovered it was a lullaby which he immediately taught me—I shall write the Russian as it sounds to English ears:

By-oo, byoshki by-oo,  
Né lojeecia na kryoo,  
Preediot serinky vollchok,  
Ee ookhvatet za bō-chok.

Bye-by-husha-bye,  
Don't lie on the side of the bed,  
A grey wolf will come,  
And take you by your side.

Isn't it sweet? Now for the laboratory: I must help Kira.

BUNNY.

[*Letter from Kira. Enclosed in Letter 32.*]

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16, U.F.T.Y.

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

Dear M.,

Thank you very much for your letter long time ago and also for razor-blades and cuttings and finally for your telegram. We still have not money, but now money is not such a vital question, we hope to have them in a day or so. To

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be without money among the people who have money is rather awful, but it is rather amusing when nobody has not any. Anyhow we are not depressed by our penniless state, or State.

We thank for this morning paper, "rag" as you rightly called it, and we are very sorry not to have received two papers you sent or the *Observers*. You must write to G.P.O. again. I have started to work in earnest, having given my first lecture to-day, and I am rather tired—it is not so easy to speak two hours!

My new Lab. would go quite well if I could find somebody to *work*. I have a lot of people supposed to be helping me, but they pretend only. Dr Zeyprinsky and I hope to smash "the atom" and I hope also that in one or two years we shall succeed in it.

"Eddy" tells me she wrote to you about Russia, may I postpone my letter to a still later date—I am tired to-day and I must warm some milk for my baby, she is crying, "pépi, give me some milk." I hope that I shall come to England next year, but I am not completely sure in this—it is rather difficult to leave my Lab.; I hope we shall see you here in September if not before.

With love from us both, KIRA.

Isn't Kiwi sweet? I'd like to be away from him so that I could have notes like this—don't be cross that he didn't write more, anyhow he very rarely writes to anybody—I think he's written four letters only since we came to Russia.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

PS. Kiwi is sitting on the bed eating meat and egg out of the frying-pan. 11 P.M.

I just wish you could have seen the expression of surprise on Kiwi's face when he realised he had been sitting with the black frying-pan on the knees of his trousers—I think only

the abominable Bateman, of the *Tatler*, could have done it justice.

[This letter was so long because Eddie had not enough money to buy a stamp to post it sooner.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.  
19th October 1930

Darling,

Once more we are penniless—just enough for a stamp for this letter—so if you don't hear for some time it's really not our fault. I don't know how many excuses I've given for the money shortage, but here's another. It appears that a third of all Russian money is in the hands of peasants in Ukraine—naturally the state can't begin the new year's issue of notes until all last year's is in, so now all sorts of schemes are on foot to rake in money from the peasants, one scheme being that sugar can be bought for one rouble per kilo, at Co-operatives, without tickets. Really it is ludicrous isn't it—even Obreimov himself hasn't a sou—every single man Jack of us is just sitting tight. Luckily, just now, the weather is completely *marvellous* just like summer—and here we are approaching the end of October.

Isn't Xmas looming horribly near? I can't bear the idea of not having one at all—much worse, not at home. But perhaps as the days are so meaningless without names—Xmas won't have any meaning either.

To-night I was going to boil some milk for Kiwi—and the damned stuff boiled over and the pan was dry and burnt. True I forgot it—but I'm very angry to have not one spot

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of milk for my pet skeleton. Kiwi is very worried because some idiot told him I'm getting thin.

My Russian seems to be improving at last.

As ever, Egu.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

22nd October 1930

Darling,

If this note seems a little cold and distant considering its import—try and understand. Your little parcel arrived very ironically this morning just when Kira and I were feeling at our lowest ebb. It seems almost certain that if I *want* I can have a baby. It's a bit of a shock for us coming at a time when we are so often cold and hungry. Kira wanted me to decide—I simply couldn't, although as he says, how could we nourish it? Finally between us, and with your really sensible advice in the back of my mind we have decided that something must be done. Kiwi is going to ask if he can't possibly have some money—and I am going to tell Katya Obreimov. *Later*. I'm not telling Katya. Kira told Boris and he knew all about it, and what to do.

I understand it's not at all a *serious* operation. I shall be quite well after two or three days. You remember Mira Borisleovna going to her grandmother who was going to have a baby? The grandmother was a hoax—but Mira had to disappear for three days and came back quite well.

BUNNY.

*Same day*

Darlingest "Aunt that might have been,"

Kira and I are quite touched with your telegram—but just today it seems possible that we may get some money here. Kira went to Obreimov and *demand*ed two hundred roubles, the operation will cost forty-five roubles—in state hospitals only eight—but it takes longer and I can't bear to think of being away from Kira longer than three days—and Kira thinks you will be horrified at the idea of abortion—even if legal. But I think you'll think we're much more sensible than to have a baby while things are rather hard—if a Mother is under nourished the baby pays all it's life.

I can't write somehow—Kira is so upset about me and he's got a terrible temperature himself, while I feel quite normal physically.

Write.

Your BUNNY as always.

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*23rd October 1930*

Darling,

Yesterday was hectic—after writing two cheerless notes, I thought coal or no coal, I simply must have a bath, if I had to go to the Doctor's and to hospital—so I marched out with my little basket and collected wood—large pieces. Twice I did this—then I set to work to saw it into small bits for the fire—some bits wouldn't break, but by this time I was so irate with it all I didn't think and I just jumped on them—the result was terrible. I thought I could die sometimes: however although Kira's a bit worried that it's all happened thus, he's really quite glad, I can tell—and I am also, it would have been so lonely in a hospital all by myself—I feel miserably

worn out, but more or less contented. I would still like to come home—Mother sent me three copies of *Homes and Gardens*. They recalled home so vividly it was awful.

We didn't get our money to-day—but perhaps to-morrow.

Elzasser, "Alsace" the German, has been in bed a week with jaundice, he sent for me and asked me to make him something to eat as he couldn't eat borsch and cutlets—I gladly did so out of our poor store—and to-day he came to say "Good-bye" before going home for a fortnight—and brought me a lot of *real* coffee beans—I could have wept.

As ever, BUNNY.

PS. How did the R.101 get on fire and where was it—and what was it doing, a trial trip? Everyone in Russia is so interested in flying.

PSS. Kira was so inquisitive that he opened your parcel in the laboratory before bringing it home to me. Wasn't it lucky that Boris Ivanovitch doesn't understand English—and didn't recognise what is quite unknown in Russia.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

29th October 1930

Darling,

Your letter arrived to-day dated October 11th; it was in Berlin 13th and Moscow 15th. But also, during the winter Kiwi tells me there will be no air service between Berlin and Moscow owing to Poland's haughty attitude when a plane is forced to land on her territory in stormy weather.

Kiwi is very annoyed with Boris at the moment—he doesn't



work in the laboratory when he should—and isn't the least bit enthusiastic—we think it is his wife behind him—anyhow Kira has decided things must improve or Boris must go back to Leningrad—personally I think Boris is sensible enough to improve—and Kira would be really sorry to lose him, even if he isn't much use at the moment. I think Mira Borisleovna will be a bit sniffy with me soon, she wants me to make some arrangement with her, whereby we share the shopping for two families, that is we take turns. I'm not having any—I've been shopping with her—it's positively boring—and a great waste of time. She goes to the market for the morning—I go to buy something.

Our house has been painted white, don't know why, because it was quite nice without, it looks rather cold now that the weather is cold and wet. However, soon, we ought to have central heating. A *little* coal came yesterday, and anyhow we are in the "brave soldier's" good books and he makes us a fire every day, because I gave him an old suit of Kira's.

Kira is going to subscribe, yearly, for the *Moscow News*, an English five-day-week paper, for me, so I shan't feel so "cut off" as now from the rest of the world. Just now there is great scandal about this "dumping" stunt of the Government. Kiwi laughs and says it's like somebody grumbling because they're getting something for nothing.

Yours, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.  
31st October 1930

Darling Bambino,

I've at last got really well away with *War and Peace*. I can't leave it—and although it seems so old-fashioned, I

really think Russia hasn't changed much, when I think of the conversations of the wives of some Leningrad and Kharkov physicists. Do you know all I can remember of their conversations is whether I would have a baby—or what I thought of Boris's new wife—or what I thought of the Director's wife, Katya Obreimov.

Levi Rosenkeivitch has brought me another little book to translate into English—something about herrings—but when I looked into it, I could only see pictures of children in a house.

Looking at *Pravda* I have discovered from a little notice about an inch square in minute print that the R.101 was flying to India when it crashed. So now you need not answer my question.

I feel so happy to-day—whether it's the glass of wine I've just drunk or the knowledge that I'm not such a burden to Kira as Mira Borisleovna is to Boris.

Poor Boris, he is so changed, and begins to look very haggard. To-day Kiwi told him he must concentrate on his work in the laboratory—but he, Boris, says he has a lot to do at the Technological Institute, he is secretary of the Facultate—so Kiwi suggested that he gave it up—but Mira Borisleovna is very angry with Kira, and says perhaps it would be better for Boris to give up this Institute, whereupon Kira ups and says he *thinks* Boris is a scientific worker and not a clerk—to which Mira Borisleovna says Boris's business is to get money for his family.

At present there is a dead-lock and poor Boris looks miserable.

BUNNY.

They started a kindergarten here to-day for the "little things" of the Institute—such peace—and the radiators are warm at last.

*1st or 2nd November*

After all the excitement of getting central heating one of the pipes has burst, so all the water has to be pumped out, and mending done before we can be warm again.

To-day everybody was paid but us, Kira being at a lecture at the time, but Obreimov recommended us to the Minister of Industry—to be paid our full salary—so we hope something will come of it to-morrow.

With love, BUNNY.

PS. We got some money at last. November 4th.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV, U.S.S.R.

*6th November 1930*

Darling,

To-morrow and the day after, 7th and 8th November, are general holidays to celebrate the October Revolution. This is the thirteenth year since it happened. Just as we do in England for Royalty, there are lights and bunting and flags and mechanical signs; of machinery, mostly. It really is an exciting atmosphere and looking over the town from our balcony it is wonderful, like fairyland with all the myriad coloured lights. In the morning Kira and I are going to see the sights. And afterwards Kira must "demonstrate" to some Ministers of the Government how his new plant works with loud bangs and plenty of sparks. That is, his important machinery. Then he's going to take photographs of their heart-beats as reproduced by some electrical contrivance, and present them with a copy.

The feast last night was very boring. I went home after two hours. But the Institute Newspaper for the Wall had one good sketch in it. The paper is coloured and put in a frame with electric light behind it. A drawing in black and white showed the path of planks leading to the big block of flats and a row of little men pulling planks up. Underneath it said "Only night knows how they warm their flats."

*10th November*

You will ask why I talk of October Celebrations when we were holding them on November 7th and 8th. They are called October Celebrations because the Revolution was October 25th, 1917. But the Revolution afterwards changed the Calendar so it falls now in November. Still the old name hangs on, and you have October works like Red October factory in Stalingrad, that the Americans on our boat were going to, when we came to Russia.

To go back again. On the 7th and 8th at night there were lots of red lights, and in the day there were lots of red flags.

On the 7th, Kira and I got up at 7 A.M. to join all the people from the Institute who were supposed to gather at 8 A.M. About 9 o'clock we decided we couldn't wait any longer so out of forty of us, only ten started. We walked anyhow—headed by a red flag with gold lettering to say we belonged to the Physical-Technical Institute. It took us from about 10, when we had to find some more scientists on Sumskaja, till 2.30, to walk what ordinarily takes half that time. Seven hours were we moving inch by inch along the route with about five hundred thousand others, and out of it all I only got one moment's thrill—and that was, when walking about twenty deep in the front of the Parliament building and grandstands, and looking back down the Ploshadi Teveleva or up the Sumskaja, it was possible to see only a sea of people and a sea of red flags. It reminded me of the French Revolution mobs.

Soon afterwards, Kira and Boris and I extricated ourselves

and went home to eat—the others still went on walking for two hours.

One thing I am grateful for—no Armistice Day for me tomorrow—for weeks before I had an awful dread of that two minutes' silence.

PS. Can't think what AHZXNS means. I didn't send the card by air mail.

*Later.*

It just struck me AHZXNS is the Russian for England. It is "АНГЛИЯ," pronounced *Anglia*.

BUNNY.

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*11th November 1930*

Your letter, nineteen, just arrived. I feel so heart-broken at the idea of your not being able to come to Russia next year, or even thinking so, I can't write anything.

With love, a miserable BUNNY.

PS. Couldn't you save about thirty pounds for your fare? You needn't spend a penny here. Kira is quite determined to save something for your visit.

The fare is about thirty pounds overland and twenty-two pounds by boat—but as Kira says when I objected to your being ten days on the water—better to see you for twenty days than not at all.

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

15th November 1930. 6 P.M.

Dearest,

Just now we, Kira and I, are on a diet of potatoes—being once more penniless. We start the day with milk and toast, lunch turns out to be boiled or fried potatoes—and dinner—fried or boiled or mashed—whichever we didn't have for lunch. I feel positively sick for a *real* bite of chocolate—this Russian chocolate—good, bad and indifferent—is all so thin—like the penny bars one gets out of a station machine.

Kira tells me a lot of workers have left the factories owing to their not being paid promptly. This getting back the State's money seems a long process.

8.15 P.M.

You see what late hours Russian students work.

Kira is at a "seminar" and then at 10.30 I'm going to cut his hair. My hair looks exactly as it's always done, but I discovered the other day that I really have a fringe, they've cut my front bits so short, and you can't imagine how much like you I am with a fringe—I'm going to grow my hair over my ears—and make my fringe lie down—and then I'll get Kira to take a photograph just to prove my words. Kira doesn't like me to cover my forehead, he says it isn't boyish enough for me—and that I look Japanese—still he says I can do as I like.

Yes, I think a lot of women in Russia do take advantage of abortion. Still I can't figure everything out, for as I constantly tell you, I have never seen so many children anywhere, as in Russia. Perhaps the peasant class is responsible for a lot of infants. They are just like the poorer classes in England, they hate the hospitals and never go till the last gasp

almost and then they probably die, and then of course their families blame the hospitals.

We'd love to have the Christmas number of *Punch*. Are the shops looking Christmassy yet? Wouldn't I like a dash round—even Woolworths.

DAMN! For the fourth time this evening the electric light has failed and I've been plunged in darkness.

What with the light and the water and the gas—here are three tales. The electricity failed the other night because the transformer at the "station" was completely gutted with fire—but it's a rotten substitute they've got, because it's failed about three times nightly since.

As for the water—yesterday we had none all day. It appears that a man came and said that as the Institute hadn't paid for water for so long, they were going to cut the supply off—and *did*. As it was a holiday, Smernoff didn't hear about it until evening—when he, knowing we *had* paid, rushed down and made them turn the supply on again.

It has been off again to-day—but I suspect it's because they've been "doing" a pump in front of the house, it's "on" again now.

And the "gas" story.

For seven days a "gasman" has been round trying to find out how many pipes there are supplying gas. Now we and Boris have had our gaspipes connected, by ourselves, for about a month—and it appears that every day some other persons have done the same—even Obreimov. However the man discovered too many taps had been fitted in the Institute for the supply, so he ups and says the supply will be cut off. It hasn't been yet. Of course all we guilty ones at home—when we hear anyone come to the door, ~~think~~ it's the gasman—so we hastily cover up the stove, or ring, as the case may be, turn off the gas, if in use, and cautiously open the door. More than this—Kira has asked me not to open the door on days when our "gassy friend" is in the offing—for we have been using

it all this time and not paid a penny. Nor for electricity for that matter, but that's because they haven't put a meter in yet. Still it's rather good and exciting to warm the kitchen, dry the clothes, warm the water for dishes, and cook all meals by gas—without paying for it.

You would have laughed at us to-day. For some laboratory experiment, Kira wanted to cover some wooden balls with paraffin wax and graphite, lead pencil only powdered. The balls were made exactly like the red wooden egg we used to have, which opened in the middle and had other red wooden eggs inside. Only Kira's balls were spherical. You see I use the proper word! Well we mixed the wax and graphite and melted it in a little crucible and I proceeded to cover the ball. Of course the wax became hard almost immediately it got on to the cold surface, but milord Kira sees that the ball was going to open round the centre, of its own accord. What does he do, but take hold of it with his fingers and squeeze. Of course the wax that wasn't set was slippery, and before you could say "Jack Robinson" we were both covered, face, hands, and hair with *black* spots. We could only laugh at first. But it was the devil to get off and we had to resort to benzine. We had a fright for one minute, because a large spot went right in my eye. But it "set" immediately, and after blinking a lot, it went in the corner.

That was how we began to set an example to all the lazy people in Kira's laboratory.

Your BUNNY.



CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.  
17th November 1930

Darling,

Kira and I are very happy to-day—we *actually got paid*—two hundred and five roubles. We get two hundred and fifty every half month, but twenty goes for income tax—and twenty-five to the State loan. I think I begin to be a bit of a miser—we've just paid Boris for the milk—and I could have *sworn* that we had paid until the 17th, that is to-day—but Boris said only until the 13th. It's only about ten roubles different, but I hate being "done." I'd rather give ten roubles away.

Anyhow now we owe *nobody* anything and we still have about a hundred and fifty roubles—but we must live on it until the beginning of December. I discovered to-day that Kira is the only one with special permission to receive his full salary—it appears Obreimov was anxious about his health when we were rouble-less.

We get about nine hundred roubles a month, that is ninety pounds, when Kira is lecturing. Our financial affairs improve already. Next year everything will be plain sailing, I hope. What a good year it will be—money—and coming home—and you to visit us.

I'm just going to have a Russian lesson and then I'm going to cover some little wooden balls with silver paper, without a wrinkle, so that I can cover them with copper. I shall do it with electricity and copper sulphate. Finally I polish them on Kira's new lathe, so that he can get the bestest possible *spark*. Night-night.

Your laboratory assistant, BUNNY.

19th November 1930

I'm just going to have another Russian lesson. I have one every other day. Sometimes it's a bit of a nuisance to be so tied, but Levi Rosenkeveitch is so nice about it that I can't be continually altering it. He may come to England in the spring—perhaps you will see him. If so be good to him for my sake. Kira and I think he's quite the nicest person in the Institute. He's terribly shy, but really quite charming, and his English is sweet, it's necessary to talk very slowly and carefully to him. He goes to Göttingen before England.

It is almost impossible to buy watches in Russia at reasonable prices, and during this money slump Levi sold his, so Kira and I are going to give him one of Kira's, all cleaned and polished, for giving me Russian lessons. Do you think that's a good idea?

After Xmas we hope to go to Leningrad and Levi will teach me to ski—and help me choose my boots and skis—won't it be fun? and even if we don't go away Levi will teach me here.

With a name like that of course he is a Jew.

Only one thing you mustn't talk about is *Jews*. It's a safe rule in Russia, never joke or criticise Jews because the most innocent-looking people turn out to be Jews. And about a half or three quarters of any of the people *worth* anything or in important positions also happen not to be really Russian, so I've stopped telling jokes about them, only listen. Don't suppose you'd approve. I'm going to play Beethoven with Obreimov after my lesson, he's taught me the eighth sonata, *Pathétique*, it sounds well on my violin. He is a wonderful "timeist" and quite musical in a strange way. But he can't play like Kira.

But then, who can?

As always, BUNNY.

PS. We are a bit peeved with Boris—you know I was right about our having paid for the milk till the 17th, Kira thought so too, but afterwards I found it written down. However we can't say anything, but to-day Boris, knowing we've got some money, came and asked us to lend him some money to buy trousers. I grant you he *needs* some new trousers. Still, why should *we* buy them for him, which is what it amounts to.

However, Kira very cleverly says to me "Eddie, how much money have we left—seventy roubles?" Whereupon I go and extract seventy roubles from our little pile, so Boris asked us how much we could spare, so I very gallantly gave him half seeming very generous no doubt, on the understanding he will pay back in six or seven days; personally I don't think he'll ever pay it back.

Your miser, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

21st November 1930

Darling,

I went to see a ballet called *Ferenji* last night with Katya Obreimov. As a ballet I didn't think much of it, but as a skit on English people in India—wonderful—and there was a simply lovely musical parody on "God Save the King," but I'm sure half the people there didn't realise it was so clever. It came so subtly at first, even English me found myself thinking—oh, isn't that like "God Save the King," and sure enough it was. But on the whole it was a stupid story with the inevitable Russian ending: a red flag literally, not the music of "The Red Flag"; rather boring.

After it was over there was such a crowd for the tram—

and until you've tried it you've no idea how you must fight your way on to a tram. So Kira and I took a sledge. It was very exciting, much quicker than a droshky. We've had snow, three to twelve inches deep, for about a week. It is wonderful, and the sun shines and everywhere looks blue and glistening. It isn't the *real* winter until about the end of December. We hope to go to Leningrad for some ski-ing. Won't it be fun? Last night was terrible; during the day a thaw had set in, but not sufficient to be noticed, then at night it froze. I've never seen such a state, even the snow had a hard sheet of ice on top and you could walk on it, if you didn't fall down, without sinking in—very dangerous and, I'm told, very rare even in Russia. This morning it's really thawing, so I suppose we shall soon be back to mud.

Love from BUNNY.

PS. I still work in the laboratory.

PPS. *Seriously*, I want you to come to Russia very much. So *if* it's possible can you tell me *definitely* whether you are coming in September next year or not—perhaps you would like to come this Xmas for ski-ing instead? It is so wonderful here now. Do try.

22nd November 1930

We went to the Club Theatre with Ivanenko last night to see the Isadora Duncan school from Moscow. We found, to our great joy, the theatre was one that we had seen and admired our first morning in Kharkov and have never found since, very modern, rather like the Festival Theatre in Cambridge, but better, and as yet clean, which says much in Russia. Having disrobed, the *rule* in Russian theatres, we found our seats and had plenty of time to gaze around. The interior of the theatre is spoilt to my mind by the back, a stupid plaster frieze, I call it frieze for lack of a better name, though

it runs from the floor to balcony—perhaps I'd better try to sketch it. You see two women and children, then two men, over their heads fly aeroplanes, tanks, trains, tractors, and a steamship which seems headed for the stratosphere. I think the line of the diagonal boxes is entirely spoilt by the tier of round boxes next the stage—why not have the stage boxes square too? But there are some rather telling lines in the moulding. It was a good show.

BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*29th November 1930*

Darling,

Boris paid back his debt. We felt quite rich for a day, but you may be sure we won't keep it long, somebody will always find it necessary to borrow from us.

The club of the Institute is to be opened in about a fortnight—Kira and I are going to perform, piano and violin. Haven't practised for ages—and just now Kira plays "rags," that he asked Mother to send, all day. He's very keen on "There ain't no sense" and is going to "adapt" it to Russian words for a concert we intend to have in the Institute some day.

*6th December*

This trial of the "Wreckers" seems to be taking to itself enormous proportions—now it is being carried on behind closed doors—while they investigate the relations of each culprit with their respective Ambassadors. France seems to have

got itself a little entangled but I don't suppose it will take any notice now the affair's been discovered.

Do you mind explaining *why* the *Morning Post* thinks "it is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for Mr Henderson to see that war with U.S.S.R. is absolutely necessary"? Does the League of Nations still exist? As far as I can make out from bits that Kira tells me—and from cartoons—we seem to be surrounded with hostile neighbours. I hear that Germany has appealed to the League of Nations about Danzig and the ill-treatment of their subjects by the Poles. Hans does well after all to go about Danzig with a little revolver for poison-gas bullets.

*Joan of Arc* sounds like the usual Russian film—all dashing hither and thither, no peace. I don't speak of *Earth* nor of the others you have seen, but the machinery kind. My eyes positively ache after a mechanisation film.

I knew you'd see our Russian film *Earth* before I did. Still I have that pleasure to come. I agree with you there's nothing inspiring or beautiful in birth or death either. But the film—isn't it a classic? Yes, the young Russian girls have bobbed hair or Eton crops and a lot of them are beautiful. The women one sees in town are sometimes striking. But the *majority* of Russian women are exactly as you see on films, hair included. To make a beautiful film with such women is a bit of an achievement perhaps. Anyway it's true to life.

With love, BUNNY.

7th December 1930

Kira is terribly thrilled with Edgar Wallace—he's going to read to me in bed every night. We've started with *The Missing Million*. Not bad going, to receive them so soon—28th November—7th December.

10th December 1930

Darling,

Have you seen this cutting in the *Evening News* about the trial of the "Wreckers" in Moscow? How the sentence was sure to be capital punishment and was to take place in the central square in Moscow in full daylight? What lovely ideas the newspapers get—the sentence is four to ten years' imprisonment for the leaders—the minor people haven't been tried yet.

Have you been to Ania's yet?

Kira's so excited about his "crystals." Hope he's not disappointed in his theory. Thank you very much, but Kira already has that book of Jeans' *The Universe Around Us*. Scientific books find their way very quickly to Russia.

But we do like you to send us novels. I mean, *I* do!

EDDIE.

11th December 1930

Dear Old Bean,

Having just posted one letter, I immediately begin another—with a request for some darning wool; but as wool seems dutiable you'd better only send me one card at a time.

Kira is very angry to-night, because he's had to go to the Palace of Industry to an important meeting when he might be playing with his crystals. He discovered a most exciting thing about them last night—had a bet for a bottle of wine with Obreimov, and won; so we shall be well away in a day or so.

It's 8.30 P.M. Kira's as bad as Father over meals. He swears

every day he'll come home at such and such an hour, it's invariably half or one hour later, and then—in spite of the fact that I've been getting more and more angry at the ruined meal and the fickleness of men—he devises such ridiculous ways of showing how contrite he is, that I just have to laugh.

12.30

Just now we're rather flabbergasted, having had a note from the Post Office to say that there are two parcels, one for Kira and one for me, for which we must pay three hundred and sixty-eight roubles—about thirty-six pounds ten shillings. As we imagine it is tea and coffee from Mother, and perhaps a plum pudding, this sum is ridiculous. *Much* as we want the enclosures we're going to make a fuss, and if they still demand the three hundred and sixty-eight roubles we shall return the parcels home, with tears and tribulation.

We are going to play Beethoven with Obreimov to-night at 10. We shall play for hours. Wish you could listen.

17th December

Darling,

Mother's parcel had *soap* in it. Kira argued so long and loud we got it without payment.

Yes, isn't *The Daily Worker* a rag? Witness this article I have marked. It is mostly true—the *workers* here can get lunch for twenty-five kopeks—soup and meat cutlets. Though *we* must pay one rouble for dinner—soup, meat cutlets with potatoes. Lunch in the Institute dining-room is seventy-five kopeks, so their statements are not far out. But when they go on to say in heavy type, "In general it must be made clear that the supply of necessities is now ample for the whole population. To begin with, the grain problem is solved. The days of bread shortage, the menace of famine, are gone for ever, only last summer there were still bread rations, but now there is unlimited bread for everyone," I must make the com-



ment that whoever wrote this is talking about one lucky place, because we are still rationed for bread in Kharkov.

Evidently we're not going to Leningrad because Igor and Kobeko are coming here to work with Kira and a little man called Shura Shalnikoff, rather sweet and terribly fond of Kira. It will be rather gay.

*Of course* something will happen to help you come to see me in September—and of course if you see Ukraine in 1931 we shall go to Crimea or the Caucasus in 1932—and it won't cost much. You simply must see the world while you can and Russia is a good slice of it. Good in both senses.

I love you and I'm sorry you will have Christmas without me.

BUNNY.

PS. Who is Amy Johnson?

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

19th December 1930

My Dear,

*Angel Pavement* was just an adorable two days for me, but how sad I felt reading the description of Hay's Wharf.

Quite off his own bat, my lord took pencil and paper and wrote you a *long* letter last night—I don't wonder it's taken all this time to think about it. He asked me to correct it, but really the English is so sweet I just *can't* make it "proper," so don't rag him about it or he will know I didn't correct it.

I'm very pleased with myself these last days in spite of approaching Xmas. I've made Kira a little bookshelf, that is two book-ends attached to a piece of wood, mainly black, but with two sailing boats, cut out in fretwork, painted gaily at

each end; and I've got a notion for one for you—a "Troitia," that is a sledge with three horses. I don't know when it will be done.

To-day I arranged for a woman to come and do the washing at home—it will be much cheaper and things won't get "lost." Also I've rearranged bedroom and dining-room so it's all quite gay and jolly.

An *Observer* arrived to-day, Kira always gets so excited about them. Forgive him for not writing before, it isn't that he doesn't want to. Happy New Year, darling. I shall surely see you this year and of course that is a bright outlook for me.

YOUR BUNNY.

PS. Christmas morning. Kira's going to buy me some skis.

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[*From Kira. Undated, enclosed in previous letter.*]

[This letter from Eddie's husband is a brilliant exposition of Soviet aims and ideals. Scientist, philosopher and ardent Communist, he explains here in a few pages what many authors have failed to express so perfectly in as many volumes, the spirit of the new Russia. No one who reads this letter, whatever his political creed, can remain unimpressed by its ardent desire for world reformation.

It is written in pencil on the back of some old bills from a Cambridge garage. For the Soviet Government had provided Kira with a car while he was a student at Cambridge. No demand for money was ever questioned, and so long as Kira was at Cambridge money was always instantly forthcoming. The Soviet did not leave its representatives penniless when they

were abroad. The Russians at home were asked to make great sacrifices in order that the country might obtain foreign exchange. When the Soviet had that foreign exchange it was used wisely and to the best advantage of the nation as a whole.

Because there are few letters printed in the English language with more important content than this one from the Russian Kira, it is printed exactly as it was written. Indeed, few foreigners could hope to express their meaning more perfectly in the English tongue.]

It seems to me that once already I have written to you about my point of view on the Russian present day affairs, certainly it is very difficult for you to understand what is happening in our country, especially when you read all your newspapers with completely different aspects on Russia. I have no hope that you will appreciate my, or our Russian, point of view, but perhaps it will interest you. Firstly about the economical situation. Sometimes you can read in your newspapers that we are starving. Certainly we are not, but certainly also that life is hard. But in the same time I can say that the economical situation is incomparably better than it was say three years ago. It is necessary to distinguish between two points of view; first of the common inhabitant, we have such a word "obivatel," which means citizen who cares only about his private life, about his salary, food, etc., you can call him, if you like, egoistic materialist, and the second point of view of someone who has some ideas about the world, about happiness of all people, and who cannot be happy seeing the tremendous disproportion of wealth in capitalistic country, even if he is well paid and has a comfortable life. Certainly "obivatel" will say that life in Russia is very bad and uncomfortable, especially if he before Revolution had a good position, some piece of land, some property. But if you will ask second class of people, they will say to you that we are going, and going very fast to better day, so better days

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not only for us Russian people but for all population of the earth. The period between 1918-1920 was reconstructive; we had to reconstruct all that was ruined by war and first years of Revolution. But in these years we have been never far from our aim; to construct socialist state, to rebuild all destroyed factories and rebuild them in the shortest period of time. We have been forced to accept NEP, new economic politics, during which private trade was allowed, some factories have been returned to their previous proprietors, but on terms of concession, etc. This period was period of "rest," after first attack on capitalism. After these years of rest, in 1928-1929 we began a new attack, perhaps more important, more vital than the first one. Now we really are trying to construct a new kind of State. A State in which will be no exploiters and no exploited. We must build a new State on completely new ground. We must give to everybody possibilities to LIVE not to EXIST. We shall transfer our backward agricultural country, with one hundred millions of illiterate peasants, to industrial, cultured country. Is it not a great aim to give all this hundred million people, human conditions of life, transfer them from savagery to culture; grafting all these people to the mental culture? Is it not worth while to try to carry out this plan, is it not worth while, to have during three to seven years, shortages in good food and clothing?

Compare our country with Capitalistic. When the Government of one of the latter is seeing that without expansion, without new markets, without new slaves, Colonies, it will be ruined or when it is worrying about another Capitalistic country which is developing perhaps too quickly, what do they do? They invent "causa bella," they invent Sarajevo murder etc. And what afterwards? Millions and millions of people are thrown to trenches to kill another millions, they are transferred to the state of wild animals, the population has shortage not only in good food, cakes, chocolates, etc.

but men in daily bread, please remember Germany in 1916-1917.

And all this for whom? For the happiness of nations? Rubbish. Is everybody in Germany or in England happier now, than they have been before the war of 1914? If you like, for the happiness of some Cankers, who exchanged millions of living souls for millions of pounds . . . is it not better to suffer just a bit for one or two years, and be sure that we shall never have such a horrible thing as a war. Why must we now in Russia have a shortage of clothes, shoes, food etc.? We are building new factories, we are giving thousands of millions of roubles for organising state farms, for education of people etc. Do you think that it cost no money? We must have new machinery, we must buy it abroad. Certainly we must increase our export, to exchange if you like our butter, eggs, wool, woolen etc. for the new machinery. But our factories are building, some of them are ready. Now we begin to produce such kind of things which we did not have before. Some of this new product is going again abroad. But it is only for three to seven years. Can you imagine what will happen when export will be stopped and all this production will be distributed between the population? If we could stop even for half a year export, our condition of life would be incomparably better than it was in 1925-1928 or even before the Revolution. But we must be patient. We must carry out our Five Year Plan and I am sure that in four or six years we shall live not less comfortably than you in England.

If your English "best sons" gave their very life for the unsound ideas of pride of nation, why cannot we be heroes for several years and do not grumble at the shortage of some good things. That is my point of view. Perhaps I am right, perhaps not. History will show. I should like to know what do you think about all this. And will certainly answer your questions, if any will be.

I am, your obedient servant, KIRA.

*29th December 1930*

Darling,

Levi came and fixed one of the rubber things to my skis. He knows all about it and when I've bought some Valinky, that is big wooden boots, like Wellingtons, only all wood, soles as well, I shall go ski-ing. Won't it be fun. The days are so wonderful, all sunshine and sparkling snow, very cold, 25° below freezing, Centigrade, about 13° below Fahrenheit. I do wish so often that you could be here and just enjoy it all with me. I am sure Switzerland can't compare with this for ski-ing and sledging.

Can you tell me the exact date of Easter please as soon as possible? There is no Easter in the Soviet calendar, and Kira must know to arrange his conference so that the Germans can come in their Easter holidays.

We are going to have a binge on New Year's Eve, Russians do recognise this. It was going to be a grand affair, but somehow a lot of it seems to have fallen through owing to the ill feeling, or suggestion of it, of the workers against the scientists. It appears they think they were not properly invited to take part so will not come at all, although the Club is theirs as much as ours. Stupidity, but there you are. Now there will be a concert, a supper and afterwards a little revue of the life of the Institute from the commencement, very witty, and sometimes critical, all due to Boris. For instance, great excitement is to be made out of telegrams between Rutherford and Obreimov for the return of Kira to U.S.S.R. for the organisation of our dining-room. Kira and I are to present ourselves "cum motor bike" singing "It's a long way to Leningrad," and Monsieur X . . . whose scandal and baby you don't believe in, is to feature, or rather not to

feature, but an announcement is to be made regretting our inability to show his laboratory and assistants, but just now he is very busy writing a book entitled *The Influence of X-ray on Morality*. N.B. He is the X-ray expert.

We were going to make a great hit with Boris Ivanovitch Kortashensky, Kira's assistant, but he being a Pole rather objects, and so we shall not use all our wit against him, really he is a fool, he breaks everything he lays hands on especially glass, so a well-known Russian folk-song is to be sung about him beginning "Glass, glass falls and breaks, and my life is also broken forever." Isn't it fine there being just such a song. And another man who is returning to work in Leningrad because of homesickness is to have for his tune another song "Oh, Mama, Mama, what shall I do?"

This letter is very dull, but then I don't go out often, except to the market and now there is nothing very exciting to be bought, no toys, a few jugs and things, and it's so cold I sometimes think my fingers will drop off. It's positive agony when they begin to thaw.

I may try and go to Moscow to Luba's for two days to buy you some little dolls.

Now we're going to a rehearsal for the revue.

Bye-bye, BUNNY.

6th January

*Kiss me, Sergeant*, sounds a disgusting film. We don't get sex films in U.S.S.R. Kira says that I'm to tell you that he's perfectly satisfied with my "present" and my "past" doesn't affect his feelings or arouse one iota of jealousy. I daresay he hopes for my "future" but I know that I'm perfectly free to leave him if ever I want to, for which reason I'm more likely to stay, and he thinks although *Maurice Guest* may describe a lot of young men, it isn't his idea of love.

Really the more I live with Kira, the more I realise that

he is quite the only man I could have married, he takes all my eccentricities as a matter of course.

Yesterday as I was going to the market, and as it was very slippery, he suggested in all seriousness that I should take some cinders in my basket and throw them before me as I walked. Can you picture it? I'm certain Kira doesn't understand how you can like living in such Victorian surroundings but I quite understand the feeling of luxury, at being awakened with morning tea and everything ready for you.

I'm going to find Kira. It's 6.40 and we're supposed to have dinner at 6.

Kira eventually arrived at 6.55, but he brought my ring back. One of the students in the Institute has been making it, my wedding ring, narrower and really now it is rather nice, and quite straight at the side and top and engraved. Kira is afraid the edges will cut me, but I don't think so.

What is the use of anybody talking about handwork in Russia, when even a reel of cotton must be bought on the market surreptitiously? Heaven knows I'd like something to do, that's why I'm decorating the house I suppose. Kira is dying for me to make his room "mad," but I think a study is the last place for such a scheme so I've done nothing yet. I think we must have all the Edgar Wallaces now. You sent: *The Just Men of Cordova*. *The Missing Million*. *Traitors' Gate*. *The Double*. *The Mystery of the Summer House*. *The Mystery of the Sandhills*. *The Confession of Helen Varden*.

But Kira really likes Edgar Wallace unless you know of anything to equal *Dracula*.

Now I must mend Kira's socks, but the holes are so big I don't think I've enough wool.

I was going ski-ing yesterday but the weather has changed, and only skating is possible, not even walking, everywhere is like a sheet of glass.

Night-night, BUNNY.



PS. Kira's thinking of growing a beard again. Put the blades in your next fat letter so that nobody will know.

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KHARKOV 2

*8th February 1931*

Darling "Marusha,"

I think this suits you somehow.

Thank you ever so much for your letters and the wad of newspaper cuttings which arrived yesterday. They must be rather terrifying for Mother and Father. Of course there's a lot of truth in the articles and Kira thinks they're very well written, and is very interested, but there's a lot that isn't true also, and a lot of exaggeration. [The newspapers reported "purges" in Russia.] After I'd read them I was left with an awful dread that perhaps we might have cause for fear some day, but I don't think it will be under the present regime, because Kira is so whole-heartedly for it, and anyhow after Kira had read them, he just laughed and said I was a silly-billy to take any notice of what newspapers say, when we are actually living very happily in Kharkov, and now I realise I was a goose, but it was just five minutes' panic.

Igor and Marina have gone after almost a month, and the house seems so empty. I like having Kira to myself again, but Marina is so sweet, not like a sister-in-law at all, and I really learnt a lot of Russian with her, and in the end wrote quite an intelligent Russian letter to Lubasha and Feydya in Moscow. I shall endeavour to write to Ania, but I expect she will only laugh at it, but I think I must know as much as her "little thing" now.

I went with Levi and his fiancée to the Park skiing the other day. It was simply fine. I can go along quite well with-

out falling down now, but not yet down very steep hills, so I prefer the left bank of the river. We can go excursions to the villages round, so easily, on ski.

I told you Levi had taken a ticket at the library for me, free of course. As yet I've read two of Jack London's books, he's terribly popular in Russia, *Cleopatra* by Haggard, one Scott, one Edgar Wallace and one Benson. How many Russian authors would I find in the original, say, in Birmingham Public Library? It's a thought.

Write again soon.

Love from BUNNY.

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18th February 1931

Darling Marusha,

Kiwi was ill last night and we could neither of us sleep, thanks to a woman below who seems to have a desire to become an opera singer, carolling till 2 A.M., so at 3 o'clock we sat up in bed and drank tea and talked, and I've discovered Kira really has a bit of Cossack in him, and a bit of Balkan, what are people called who live in the Balkans?, from his Mother, so our offspring, if any, would be a bit of a mixture wouldn't it? But I've simply no desire for anything of the kind now, only an idle curiosity to see if our child would be in the least like Kiwi, but when I've discovered that, I will give the child to you.

Love from both, EDDIE.

PS. He just brought the pleasant news that we shall have about ninety roubles more in a few days and as we've still got eighty from last pay-day, we shall be able to buy some chairs, and some wood for the kitchen fire; the chairs will be awful but I shall paint them.

27th February 1931

Darling Marusha,

I'm writing for Kiwi, who is nearly at his last gasp. I for one will be glad when the conference is over, he's just wearing himself to a "shadder," work, meetings, meetings, work from 10 A.M. to twelve midnight, often going without meals.

But this is just to say that although he likes getting your postcards so much that he's loath to stop them by admitting that he has written to Rutherford, he can't bear you to send cards uselessly when you might save up and write him a long letter in answer to his on Russia. Also he is not in a fit state to see anyone owing to the length of his beard, on which he pretends razor blades have no effect. Also, is Edgar Wallace dead?

To tell you the truth Kira has had a letter from Rutherford thanking him for his congratulations on being raised to the Peerage. So he remains,

"Your obedient and 'umble" KIRA.

PS. Kiwi and I have amusing conversations sometimes. To-day we were discussing what would happen if either of us died, and it's quite accepted that if I die Kiwi will commit suicide, and if he dies that I shall come and keep house for you. Then we got on to murder. Kira says if I murder him I must cut his veins with a razor blade while he's in a hot bath because it's quite painless, a little gory, but what matter. Then I shall get five years' hard labour, you aren't hanged here for murder, only for an extremely great offence against the State, so at the end of my five years I shall be specialist in some trade and can earn my own living as most Russian women do.

Which of course is all quite stupid because I couldn't hurt a hair of my Kiwi's head, much less cut him with a razor.

Darling,

Kiwi is simply rotten to-day and is coming home early, that means about 11 P.M. Really he is adorable, however ill he is, he always thinks of me. Will you buy some aspirins, but don't send them in the bottle, send odd ones in a letter. Can't you buy them each pellet wrapped in paper? They really do help Kiwi's temperature down when he's not well.

I got *The Daily Worker* to-day and *The Workers' News*, the latter is a Russian paper for English workers here. It's not too brilliant but is better than *The Daily Worker*. Really the latter is bilge, can't imagine how Dobb puts up with it. Intelligent people will never appreciate it, and surely some workers are intelligent even in England. Kira argued with me last night because I told him *The Daily Worker* was a rag, he says it's for workers and that they wouldn't appreciate a serious treatise.

3rd March 1931

Do you know the kind of mood when you want to let off steam, and yet feel so miserable that you can't. I'm so fed up, it's so cold, and now the thaw has set in its horribly wet. The snow is still on top, but you walk, as you think, quite safely, then your foot suddenly disappears in about six inches of wet snow, and into a goodly pool of water at the bottom, and when you try to get out you only go deeper, so after that you don't care, and arrive home soaked, where there is no wood, no gas, and no kerosene, so it takes about four days to dry a pair of stockings.

If you've really read your *Observers* you'll have read the article about Kerosene queues. I'm suffering from it. The gas is off for five days owing to lack of fuel to make it, in

consequence I have to resort to my Primus. Also thanks to Mira Borisleovna I find myself with only five litres instead of ten litres of Kerosene, because Jukesha was ill and she borrowed my Primus. To add insult to injury I stood two and a half hours for the precious stuff, and she never offered to pay me back although she asked me to buy it.

Our heating system isn't working now, because there is no coal, so they've had to empty the water out of the pipes in case it freezes, added to which the rain and melting snow flooded the cellars in our house last night, so to-day three men are pumping it out, and every time one goes out, one has to wade through a deep pool. Grrr!

*Later.* Kiwi came home but instead of going to bed is working in our usual position in the sitting-room. We lie on the floor on cushions, with rugs on top of us, and the tiny electric radiator he made just in front of our noses, and pretend we are warm.

I'm going to teach English to Sasha Lipunsky and his wife, Tossy, and Levi, and perhaps a man called Brilliantov, not for money of course. They seem to want to read something modern and to talk, so we're going to read *Angel Pavement*, every other day for an hour or so.

I forgot to say that added to other minor troubles our water bottle has sprung a leak, so we lie like two blocks of stone unable to go to sleep for hours.

Oh, my darling, I do love you. England seems so far away.

Your BUNNY.

*15th March 1931*

Darling Marusha,

Kira is awfully pleased about the aspirin, and thinks you're very clever to have sent them like this, also he thanks you in anticipation for the promised thrillers. He will certainly need something to buck him up after this conference. Why,

oh why, can I not come and talk to you. Somehow life here makes me want to shriek "Here's a pretty kettle of fish, a pretty kettle of fish" like Gilbert and Sullivan.

I mustn't forget to tell you that the conference has arrived, your Easter conference!—"yours" because you sent the date for it—and lots of people with it, who are all awfully nice to me.

Igor and Pavlusha are staying with us, and a little man called Mischa Irymeyv who understands only Russian, and is very shy, and is apt to make me nervous, but on the whole we are a jolly crew in spite of the cold. We sit and shiver, but still laugh. Pavlusha is an absolute scream, but of course complications had to happen. We agreed to put up Shura Shalnikov, of whom Kiwi is very fond, and Boris was to take "Booba" Nemeonoff. But "Booba" doesn't like Mira Borisleovna and made some excuse to sleep elsewhere, whereupon Boris took Shura to stay with him, which left us with a spare bed.

The next thing was that Boris's first wife, who is a woman scientist and had put up at Kharkov's best hotel for the conference, heard we had a spare room. She immediately came to Kiwi with a sad tale of the hotel bed alive with bugs. After consulting with me in English, useful sometimes, Kiwi invited her to stay in our flat. In spite of the inconvenience I said most heartily "Do come," knowing that if Lyllia Prokovna is here, Mira Borisleovna will stay away. She has just been to say so, and hopes I won't be offended. I feel like a female Machiavelli.

It is a particularly unpleasant situation really because on the fourteenth there was to have been a third trial for the custody of Andrusha, the son of Boris and Lyllia Prokovna, and it didn't come off, so they are feeling very bitter one with another, so much so that Boris and Mira Borisleovna intend to keep Andrusha out of her sight. I may say she has already seen him, and we are scared to death of her making a scene.

I think Boris and Lyllia Prokovna are behaving very stupidly over their divorce, because it was over a year ago. Now they are starting to call one another names and to get witnesses to prove this and that and the other concerning the state of their minds and so to prove the other parent unfit for custody.

Added to which we have another unpleasant situation over the actual conference itself. I don't feel I dare detail the whole situation, for fear of censors, but it is such that two rival factions are here together, and unfortunately Kiwi has fallen between them. He admires the brain and work of one person, but at the same time has produced a very clever piece of work which disproves this aforesaid man's theory. Consequently the opposite faction will seize on it for their own ends, so poor Kiwi, who was really proud of his work, is doomed to disappointment because he cannot get excited about it.

Thanks to the Moscow Trial of which you made fun, some scientists have been "under suspicion" and all this is politics interfering with science.

How do you like this piece of poetry about me?

"WHO IS IT?"

A lengthy stride, a starry eye,  
A wrist as taut as steel,  
A deep clear voice, a Grecian nose,  
A sport from head to heel.

A long white coat as pure as snow,  
And hair as black as jet;  
She's coming back to school one day  
But don't expect her yet.

She's gone into a country far  
Where Russians fight their foe,  
But as her partner's work was there,  
Of course she had to go.

*Romantique, n'est ce pas?* Written in the school magazine by one of my late charges, another of them sent it and wrote by the side "This is you."

Now I am going to make coffee. I actually bought some beans for twenty-four roubles half a kilo, about one and quarter pounds, and because of the Conference, I've got lemon for tea, but they've gone up to twelve roubles each, I was a fool not to buy some when they were only four roubles.

I'm sending two cloths, one yellow, and another blue and brown and white, one is for Lucie and one for yourself.

The wife of the Institute's glass-blower is very ill with tuberculosis and is having an awful time. I wonder why the spring is so bad for people with T.B. It's a simply ghastly feeling to realise that I may lose Kira from it before we get old. Stupid and morose to think of it in this light, but I cannot tell Kira that, and there's only you. Of course he may live forever, but he's really ill, and such a lot of people in Russia seem to suffer with tuberculosis and to die so young.

*17th March*

The meals in the dining-room are simply foul. Can't think why, because it was said they would be better for the Conference. You would think that seeing Yoffey and his wife turn away from the food there, the Management would do something. I told you we invited them to lunch, and in spite of wood which was damp, hence a rotten fire, we had tomato soup, roast chicken and potatoes, and bread sauce and gravy, apple snow and biscuits, and coffee.

I thank heaven it went off without a hitch in spite of the fact that Kiwi brought an extra person without warning me. Nice to think I can talk to the great Yoffey in Russian. Do you remember how scared I was when Kira took me to meet him in Leningrad and I could not utter one syllable?

To-day there is going to be a discussion to decide whether Kira can spend three months of the year in Leningrad. If



this is successful I don't suppose the Odessa project will come off, but in spite of sun and sea I prefer Leningrad, because there I know lots of people and there are theatres and pictures and real Russian is spoken, not the Ukrainian language as here and in Odessa. And anyhow Leningrad is very beautiful.

Lyllia Prokovna tells me the trial for Andrusha is to be to-morrow. It was postponed for four days. But since yesterday I've decided it's six of one and half a dozen of the other and all for one stupid thing. But really it makes an awful lot of difference whether a chain is pulled or not when a lot of people are living in a house, or a flat as small as ours, and Lyllia Prokovna doesn't conform, in spite of all her travels in Germany this year. The average Russian has no sense of public hygiene, and that is one thing I never can get reconciled to. Eating soup and making a noise while doing it makes no impression on me now, or spitting in the streets, or men going unshaved for four days out of five.

Will finish for to-day.

As always, BUNNY.

The "American-Russian," as Kiwi and I call Professor Gerisaniiovitch, says I must be very careful what I write, because it is quite possible to get into trouble through letters so I'm afraid there will be no revision of the Russian letter.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

13th April 1931

Darling Marusha,

We thank you for four more blades which arrived with the cheques. I'm sure Kira would be most grateful if you

could send one or two a month, he makes them last most wonderfully but it would be such a relief to be certain of there being others, and if he comes home with a beard you'd hate it, but it seems to me a beard, a real beard, is better than being just unshaven for four or five or six days, and to add to this, when his blades are too blunt he pricks me when he kisses me, and I object, and he hates the barbers and so and so and so, if you will be a nice kind Marusha.

The Committee wouldn't release Kira to go to Leningrad after all. They need his work here. Of course the climate of Kharkov is much better for Kira than Leningrad, so now I don't want to live there, even if it is a gayer place. But I do see what fun we could have if Garry and Marina were here, instead of a thousand miles away at Leningrad, and Shura Shalnikov too. He really is sweet. Do you know he is buying our motor-bike so that we can buy a piano. He calls me "Edditchka" and I really like him very much, as I do, oh, lots of people Kira knows in Leningrad. Leningrad has a pull, like London has for everyone at home. But in spite of all these attractive Russians, I don't think I can ever be really interested in any one man again. Kira is so utterly satisfying in spite of ill health, and nerves, and coming home late for dinner and lunch, he somehow completely absorbs me and I want no other amusement. This morning before getting up he sang me pieces from the operas. I just lay helpless with laughter at the end, because although he can sing sufficiently in time for me to recognise the melody, he is never really on the note, and I secretly think he makes it worse than it is, to amuse me more.

I have just finished decorating Kira's study, and as wood is so short and as Kira wanted a standard lamp, I made a tall pole for the lamp out of rolls and rolls of newspaper glued together and painted over. It is all very futuristic, walls and furniture too. I don't think Boris approves of the final effect, but if he says anything detrimental I have my an-

swer, to wit, "That at any rate it won't be copied if he doesn't approve." I am a cat. But Mira Borisleovna copies everything I make.

Much love, EDDIE.

## 53

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*19th April 1931*

Darlingest Marusha,

Having had a "binge" last night, Kira and I have got that "morning after the night before" feeling, especially as we had to get up at seven for him to go to a lecture. What would we have said at Cambridge to lectures at 8 A.M.?

I went to the market and just for a joke had this photograph taken, so although it's very bad, one of these "ready while you wait" stunts, and very primitive apparatus, you can see how Russian I have become on my visits to the "bazaar." Kira simply roared with laughter at my shadowless face as he calls it. I don't wear a handkerchief over my head when I go to town. I could, but I'm afraid of degeneration. Already I have lost all interest in clothes, and I'm afraid I shall not care about manners much longer. I have been known to walk in the streets of Odessa spitting out the shells of sunflower seeds. This was mimicry, and I had to stop to please Kira, who said nice women don't spit in the streets in Russia. So am I not an obedient wife?

I'm afraid my letters are horribly dull compared with yours. I have no excitements, beyond a strange soldier asking me to have my photograph taken with him. I just winked and waggled a finger and walked off, so Kira says he's not

afraid of my going out alone any more. I have the Russian way of looking after myself. Secretly, I should like to be able to look after my money better, it just goes, and although I know I'm being rooked outrageously, I have to pay or leave it, because when it comes to a long argument my Russian gives me away.

Last night we had a party to celebrate the completion of Kira's study in its mad state. It was quite jolly and now, 1.15 noon, Kira is sleeping off the effects of the Benedictine. I can't sleep when the sun shines and so I've been playing with soil on the balcony, and setting some nasturtium seeds, but as they must be at least three years old, I don't think anything will come of them, but it would be jolly to have some flowers hanging over the edge, don't you think, and creepy crawlies walking into the drawing-room.

I think the spring has really come, and little blue flowers are being sold in thousands in the streets. I bought lots and felt happy in spite of the fact that while I was buying them a small urchin was dragged off by a policeman and gave the most unearthly yells I ever heard, positively murderous. He kept it up for so long it began to be funny.

Kira and I are going to see about a Russian passport for me soon, and then we shall dare to apply for a pass to England. It seems that it is very difficult to get a pass now so I guess I shall be coming alone.

What about coming to us in August, or July?

With much love from both, BUNNY.

PS. Did Lucie ever get a letter I sent?

PPS. Next winter we shall have an open fire. Did I tell you I wrote to *Homes and Gardens* and they sent a plan of a simple brick fireplace! There is no such thing as an open fireplace in Russia, so a plan was necessary. Ours will be the

only one in Kharkov and next winter if there is no central heating I can go wooding outside the town and we shall keep warm.

Kira is quite incapacitated after the conference and has been ordered a month's rest, in fact if Kira weren't so tired we should probably accept an invitation to go to the Observatory at Simiez, near Yalta, and Sevastopol, a lovely spot, but he feels too weary to undertake the journey, and anyhow if he went he would be sure to work and he is resting here, not even going to the Institute. I'm feeding him with milk and eggs and things, and I hope he will soon be well.

I am enclosing Rutherford's letter to show that your post-cards had the desired effect, but please return it because Kiwi wants to keep it.\*

*28th March*

To-day Kiwi and I went to town together for the first time since December 25th, the day he bought my skis; he to buy books and I to buy distemper for Kira's study, but he couldn't find any books and I was only allowed a hundred grammes of distemper. "I arskys yer!" A hundred grammes, it's about enough to paint a square inch, so every day I shall go and buy a hundred grammes until I've got enough and buy some washing blue to make it a better colour.

Kiwi felt so blown up after dinner yesterday he said "I feel as fat as an impregnated woman." He was surprised when I laughed. He says he understands how Epstein did the Genesis—eating a huge dinner and sculpting as he felt after it. We see from the *Observer* that Genesis is being sold for over a thousand pounds so everyone can stop being excited now.

All my love, BUNNY.

"With love from Kira, expecting letters." [In Kira's writing.]

Isn't Kiwi the limit? But he's very disappointed you didn't answer his learned thesis. [Letter 47.]

*24th April 1931*

I simply couldn't resist this postcard.† Kira and I were in town this morning to see about a passport, but unfortunately this office was closed, so we went to the Kino and afterwards to the "Krasnaya" Hotel for lunch. Seventeen roubles, my love. Still we felt stupidly elated and came home and went to sleep.

We saw the usual Revolution film. Talkies ‡ have come, but only in the evenings, and it's a bit wearying to get tickets. So I have not been yet. At present it's a Symphony of the Donetz Basin.

Love, BUNNY.

\* [There was a close friendship between Kiwi and his former Professor at Cambridge, the late Lord Rutherford.]

† [The charm of this postcard is in its exceptionally beautiful colouring. The tunic is a soft pillar-box red against the bluest of Russian skies. Coloured flowers star the grass where the ancient soldier stands and waits. Russian colour prints are always attractive.]

‡ [These talkie machines were invented by the Russians and worked rather differently from ours. It was never the Russian idea to reproduce sound for itself. Their use of sound was more selective, sometimes symbolic, and the general effect is much quieter and more restful than ours.]

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.  
*5th May 1931*

Darlingest Marusha,

The spring is really here after several attempts, in fact half summer. It's quite hot in the middle of the day in spite of the fact that not a single leaf is to be seen yet.

You talk of English wallflowers. There are lots here and I do love them utterly. But Kira definitely dislikes wallflowers, and so I leave them in the shop. He says they're too dull. There are no yellow ones here. Anyhow we're looking forward to nasturtiums and poppies on the balcony. The Institute has planted trees everywhere this last day or two and in a few years everything will be heavenly, with flowers and grass and trees. I'm glad you're not coming this year after all, you might have found Kharkov rather bare, part of it rather like the waste land in a Lancashire town. But it won't stay like that.

To-morrow we are going to inquire about a Russian passport for me, not a British one, and you know Levi has had word from "Gay-Pay-Oo" that they have no objection to his going abroad so he may come after all.

I simply couldn't write a play about your life now that would anything like come up to the reality; and besides to be a good play, it seems to me a happy ending is taboo. Is that very Russian? But I couldn't write a play about you with any but a happy ending, could I, "moya zolotoya"? If you want to know what these Russian endearments are you'll spoil them, but "kroshka" is crumb and "zolotoya" is golden one. All my love.

Your BUNNY.

*9th May 1931*

Darling Marusha,

The heat here is already almost unbearable. Kira and I have spent the day on the balcony, which was carefully draped with rugs, to hide a picture of Adam and Eve before their expulsion from Paradise. I want to get brown and Kira wants to get strong and we're awfully lucky to have the only balcony on this side the house, so with all the sun from 1 P.M. till 10 P.M. we just laze and sleep and read your wonderful detective book to one another. Thank you so much for it, it's quite a good imitation of Sherlock Holmes and more ingenious than Edgar Wallace.

Levi has got his papers at last, and his money. Quite a lot, three months' worth. He only needs his passport now. So I suppose he will be in England the latter half of July and August. Do you think you could go to Cambridge for a day or a week-end, to collect the packages he is bringing you, that is if he's allowed to pass the customs with 'em. Ania Kapitza is on the telephone, you could ring her up in July and ask when Levi is likely to be there.

Perhaps the thought of Levi's going is why I was so homesick last night, and so blue, and I've decided I can't really wait until Christmas to come home. So we shall apply soon, and I shall come home as soon as I can get permission. I don't really fancy travelling in winter, and perhaps it's easier after all to go by boat, even if it is four or five days longer that way. When I get back, Kira and I can spend the winter in Leningrad, and go ski-ing. Being so far north the ski-ing might be much better than here. Then, too, we'd go to the theatres and be really gay, as Russians can be gay, with all Kira's friends.



I've got my Russian passport and by some strange chance it's made out in my maiden name, so if you ever send a parcel again you might address it to Edna Alfredovna and then if there's any question I shall be able to claim it. This is thanks to the queer wording on the paper I got from the Russian Consul in London. Kira doesn't want me to tell Mother and Father this, because he thinks they will jump to wrong conclusions and think after all I am not married. I am going to tell them that my passport has been made out according to my marriage certificate. In any case it will probably be easier to get a passport in my own English name rather than my Russian one.

**КОМБАЙН**—машинка, которая одновременно жнет, молотит, сортирует и насыпает зерно в мешки. У нас есть около 1000 комбайнов в заказах. Сейчас строится 2 завода комбайнов (в Новосибирске и Ростове), и завод „Коммунар“ в Ленинграде уже выпускает эти комбайны. В 1932 году все эти заводы будут выпускать около 60.000 комбайнов—т. е. в три раза больше, чем Америка.

*This is propaganda about tractors*



КАРАМЕЛЬ



**„КОМБАЙН“**  
**ГОСКОНДТРЕСТ**  
ХАРЬКОВ



Your description of your new shoes makes me so envious. I've never worn coloured shoes in the day-time. I hope they are still in fashion when I get home, only I'm sure I'll never be able to buy any, because I shan't be able to bring any money out of Russia however much we have in hand. You see we must apply to the Government for foreign currency and that's such a long process and my trip is quite a private

affair. "My trip," doesn't that sound near? It excites me.

I send you a toffee paper to prove we have both money *and* toffee. The design on the toffee paper is propaganda for tractors.

Love from BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

*25th May 1931*

Dearest Darling,

These days, lazy sunny days, are not conducive to letter-writing. I do just nothing but lie and bake and dream.

Looking through your letters I find that I have them all except the very first lost ones. I think we'd better start deciding when we shall publish our correspondence. That is yours, no one would look at my stupid jottings, but your letters make simply marvellous reading, and I often turn to them, even as a reference for odd things I find them amusing as well as useful, my dear walking encyclopedia. If it weren't for you I'd hardly know what was happening in the outside world. Russia is so busy making a new world, there is no time or inclination to study the old one.

I have found where the Cemetery is. It is north of us, you go left down the Chajkovskaja, the great broad street that runs along the north edge of the Institute land, turn right down the Pushkinskaja and the Cemetery is on the left. So that explains why funerals pass this way. I may say it is quite beautiful in the Cemetery. Why aren't Cemeteries beautiful in England? Do you remember the Cemetery outside Genoa? The glorious cloisters or galleries of statues, good enough for the Louvre.

I went with the Gerisamioivitchs to the House of Scientists on the twentieth. They played the *Unfinished Symphony* and they did not do it badly. It made a diversion, and rather nice and "intime." I shall go again because I hate sitting alone on summer evenings when Kira has meetings. It is always easy to find concerts in Kharkov and particularly in summer when it is so very warm out of doors in the evenings and people can sit in the gardens very late listening to the music.

I have been invited to become co-editor, with Weisberg, a German engineer working here, of an Anglo-German Physical Magazine. That means Physical as related to Science. I am to read and correct all the English articles; do you think I'm capable of it? I suppose it will begin in the winter and there's a possibility that I shall be paid.

Wasn't it disappointing, Kira and I were going to see *The Woman of Paris* with Adolph Menjou to-day, but when I went to get tickets this morning the programme had been changed overnight.

Boris and Mira Borisleovna are in Kiev, Kira was also to have gone but they were awful train tickets so he refused. Obreimov agreed with him. Unfortunately Levi went and Kira was a little upset because he had persuaded Levi to go and then didn't go himself. Still we shall go together one day, and perhaps you might come with us. It is the old capital of the Ukraine and quite as historic as Chester, maybe more so and with strange and beautiful architecture, Byzantine I think, and caravan routes met there. But of course those days are gone and this is the capital now.

Night-night, my darling, be happy.

BUNNY.



aren't hot enough to sleep out yet, and anyhow I must make a secure screen for the balcony, that the wind can't blow down. How the wind blows here! And a sun-shade for the top, so that it might be possible to sit there in the day-time, and also serve as a protection against rain in the night.

Kira has won a hundred roubles, I don't quite understand how. Everyone has to pay so much to the State Loan every month, and a ticket is given as a receipt, after about six months there is a draw, and the lucky numbers get a hundred roubles, or an amount that varies according to the subscription paid. I suppose it is a lottery, anyhow it's rather nice to get ten pounds for nothing, isn't it?

Life here seems to get more and more expensive, but at the same time there is more and more variety. Every week there are more goods in the shops and the price is the only barrier. It isn't like being at home but I don't think people in England need be sorry for us any more. The level of life is much better than last year and it seems there will be a good harvest and a good fruit crop as well.

I've just been to get a hankie from the bedroom and there I discovered Kira lying fast asleep with the little kit-kat, fast asleep also, in his arms. They are such a sweet picture, Kira isn't a bit ugly when he's asleep. When you objected to my calling him Kiwi, I changed it to Kiki. I've now discovered it to be an abbreviation of "kikinera," meaning elf, brownie, house-spirit, so it's rather appropriate, and we've called the kitten this also, instead of "Sneejok" although he still is snowballish.

Write to me again soon, "detka,"

YOUR BUNNY.

I'm sure Kira would send his love if he were awake. Aren't you going to write to him any more?

*20th June 1931*

My Darling,

I feel desperate, as though I shan't get home to you all ever again. I've got a letter from the British Consulate and two long question papers. I must have references. I've written to ———. Who else can you suggest? Please telegraph the name of the friend who, in your opinion, would have most influence to get me out of Russia.

Have you found about Russian divorce and English marriage? How unfortunate it seems now, that Kira and I gave way to Mother and Father and had a second marriage according to English law. If only we'd stuck our toes in and I'd said "No."

Of course you don't know what I'm talking about. It is this. The Soviet Government is very strict about letting its own citizens leave the country. Witness Levi. But it cannot stop a British subject going home to England, if there is nothing against the British man or woman. So I want to be British, after all I am British, marrying Kira doesn't change my having been born in England. But British law says I am no longer British because I married Kira according to British law in a British Registry Office. Why should a married woman have to acquire her husband's nationality? Of course if I'd only married Kira in the Russian Consulate and nowhere else, the British do not recognise Russian marriage and so they'd say I was not married to Kira and so was still a British subject, and could come home at will.

So if being married to Kira makes me Russian, if I were divorced from Kira I would not be Russian, it seems to me. Now I could easily be divorced from Kira by Russian law, and as I am now Russian according to English law, surely Russian divorce would be regarded as valid for me a Russian. That's logical, is it not? Oh dear, I didn't want to be divorced

from my Kiwi, nor does he want it, but he is so good about it and says I must, if there is no other way to come home.

You belong to the Law Society, can you find out for me?

Oh, my darling, I didn't mean to write like this, don't tell Father and Mother, but I do want to see you.

Marina and Igor are with us and Luba and Feydya come to stay on July 1st, so I'll be too busy to be blue.

Your very own BUNNY.

## 59

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

*27th June 1931*

Darlingest,

Will this picture of you that everyone likes so much in the Academy, be there when I come home? I must certainly see it. You are really beautiful, Marusia, so you needn't talk such rot, and to put it modestly, you are my sister. But as for my having a figure, to save you a shock when we meet, my figure now can only be compared with a jelly-fish.

We are having a course of Meyerhold in Kharkov. It is rather invigorating. But I feel sorry that, in spite of all the wit and brilliance which he puts into his productions, he never avoids, or rather he must give, stereotyped Russian performances. Perhaps stereotyped is not the right description or word, but I am so tired of plays and pictures that, however intriguing they may be, all end with the Revolution or with a grand Soviet finale.

I had rather a miserable birthday, because one of Kira's friends here died, and was buried on the twenty-third; a Russian funeral of any importance is an 'orrible ordeal, not

religiously, but emotionally and in the length of ritual that custom demands of the family.

I have already written to the British Consulate as you know now, it was quite necessary to get the forms and Kira and I are going to plump two hundred roubles in the bank for a passport to-morrow. What a hope.

Are you going to find out about divorce?

Yours, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.  
*1st July 1931*

My Darlingest Marusha,

I feel quite crazy to-day, went to the big market and bought some wood for thirty-five roubles, and rode all the way home in a *vostchik* on the top of it; I feel literally shaken to pieces.

Our cat is getting bigger and fatter and shinier and whiter every day. I feel quite glad we adopted her. It's rather nice to have such a small thing loving me. It may be jealousy because so many of our friends have children of their own, but bit by bit all my sanest arguments against having a baby are being weakened. I am only flesh after all. I must one day hold a small thing in my arms that is Kira's and mine, when things are more settled. . . .

I simply can't imagine why I was ever thrilled about clothes, no doubt all the enthusiasm will revive as soon as I reach England, but it all seems so meaningless here where nice clothes are never seen. I hardly ever wear anything but my old jumper and skirt, and my good frocks all hang desolate. My silver evening gown I've worn only once, alone for



Kira, because evening clothes are taboo in U.S.S.R. and day clothes are hard to get, so I need not have got a trousseau.

Damn, damn, damn. This is all apropos of my thoughts on Boris and Mira Borisleovna. It's a pity Kira likes him. We can't demand our money back, but he has borrowed fifty roubles, ten of which he never will pay back because it's so long ago, and the other forty he doesn't offer, because his damned family think they're going away, but they're still here, and Boris has been paid oftener than we have, because he lectures in three Institutes, besides working here. He borrowed it when he knew Shura Shalnikov had paid us for the motor-bike. You remember he was buying the motor-bike to help us buy our piano instead of hiring. Buying is off now. We couldn't say we hadn't got any money to lend because unfortunately he was there during the transaction. Levi owes us another forty, but there's no doubt about his paying, he's a dear, and then Ivan Vasilitch has another forty roubles of ours.

Ania wrote a few days ago, they're not coming to Russia this year; they are going to France for a month soon.

I'm reading *Mansfield Park*, got it from the Public Library. It's clever and amusing, only the "young ladies" annoy me terribly. The other books I got out were rubbish, but as I've got through about all the well-known English authors in the catalogue it has become rather a gamble, as the books have to be chosen from numbers, not titles, so you can't judge very well what you are getting.

Yet a little more scandal, I'm becoming a gossip. Ivan is at daggers drawn with his wife Katya. They've really been divorced for four years, but lived together very lovingly until a fortnight ago when Katya suddenly went to live with the Shubnikovs, taking little Koutia with her. At the end of ten days Katya suddenly decided to return and claim her rights. She has two rooms, which are left locked, in Ivan's flat. They live quite separately. He has a maid, she hasn't.

He is a scientist, she works in an office in town. Last night Katya came and for two hours told us her tale of woe. Ivan has got a wife in Germany, nobody knew about it, and is waiting for permission to go and fetch her. As this was told us by the weeping Katya under a vow of secrecy we will have to be surprised if ever Ivan does produce the second wife. Kira and I are in an awkward position, because Katya will come and unburden herself to Kira and at the same time we are definitely friends of Ivan. Talk about devils and deep seas, we're down among them here, but still happy.

Your ownest BUNNY.

PS. My little garden is growing wonderfully.

PPS. I'm just going to wash my hair in rain-water. Tomorrow will go and be made beautiful at the hairdresser.

Kira was at the Technological Institute to-day and he was declared to be the best worker at the Institute and to have got the best results for his students. Isn't it fine? I feel quite stupidly happy.

EDDIE.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

6th July 1931

Dear M.,

I suppose I must thank you for a very freezing letter as far as my affairs are concerned. After I read your letter I just felt I didn't care a damn whether I get home or not. Nobody wants to help me at all and it's not all so easy as your sentence "I'm sure you'll get a passport soon" would convey.

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You can give up all ideas about my being home in September. I shan't.

I'm sorry to write like this when I really want to write the sweetest letter, but to-day's so damned hot, and I feel like weeping every minute, and can't, because Marina is here.

Kira is very busy with Garry in the Laboratory although he's finished his lectures to-day, but he doesn't seem inclined to trouble about a passport either, and it will be so expensive to come through Germany, as I will have to do, after September, as the Baltic freezes then and the boats won't be running from Leningrad.

BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

17th July 1931

Dearest Old Bean,

You know I don't think after all that I shall come until December, the nearer it gets to September the more certain I am that I can't leave Kira alone here, but in December he will go to Leningrad for two or three months to work with Garry and then he can live with Marina and Garry. They are still with us, perhaps they will go to the country in a few days and will return for ten days about the 24th August, when we hope that Webster and Cockcroft from Cambridge will come for a few days.

We haven't heard from Dobb, but it would be rather nice if he came too.

Marina and I are each embroidering a cushion. I don't like doing it at all, but it's very popular here just now and

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Marina almost cried when at first I refused to do it, so I hastily seized it and nearly finished it first day.

I had a letter from Johnny Gamov the other day. Everybody thinks he's married though he hasn't said anything definite. Kira gets terribly teased about setting a new fashion, bringing foreign wives to Russia, first Kira, then Gamov who has married a Dane, and Ivan who has married a German girl. There will be quite a colony of us here if Gamov comes to Kharkov to live. Of course I think the reason why so many Russian scientists have married foreign wives is that when they went abroad to study, they were first astonished and then pleased to meet women who did not spend their lives talking babies, but were as well educated as themselves, and quite often doing similar work. Although there is absolutely no difference now between education of boys and girls in Russian schools and colleges, women of our generation in Russia could not have a University education at the time we did, because the Revolution was on. And of course, before the Revolution, women didn't expect, and certainly did not get, much education in Russia. And of course there is the exception to prove the rule, a few exceptional women were educated as doctors and allowed to practise before the Revolution, witness Boris's mother for one. And then remember in our day Cambridge University would not give women degrees, although they passed the same examinations with the men, who did receive their degrees. So, in fact, since the Revolution, Russia has the laugh on us, because here women are now accepted as the equals of men in every respect.

The Simeonoffs have been staying with us, so yesterday we all went to the circus, and to-morrow we play tennis, and after to-morrow we bathe not far from Kharkov. So it is very like a good summer in England, only here we are certain of the weather.

We sound like holidays, but Kira is working like a slave. He is going to be presented with a paper declaring him to be

an "Oodarnick," that is a shock worker, or best worker, and therefore leader at the Institute.

It is as you say. We don't have Sunday journalism in Russia. Soviet Russia would never descend to publishing the stupid trivial accounts of murder, theft and such-like which so titillate the English mind of a Sunday. People are not so nose-y about other people's business. The interest is centred in a wider way on the State. Yet to you I dare confess that, to an ordinary reader like myself, I find Russian newspapers dull.

The articles you send on Russia intrigue Kira. I say I shall write some when I get to England, how much do you think I could get? But Kira says they won't print my articles because they will be propaganda of the first order.\*

I hope you're keeping all your cast-off clothing for me, it will be absolutely *à la mode* in Russia, and cheaper for me, all your old shoes too. Hats I can dispense with, because in winter I shall wear a cap made of fur and in summer nothing.

Can you send me a good Fairy Story book? Not Andersen. Grimm would do, or a book with Jack and the Beanstalk kind of story. Please do, and put it down to my account. When Kira has insomnia I start telling fairy stories and he's generally asleep by the end, but I've got to the end of my stock now. Please send them soon, but they must be real fairy stories like the ones we used to read in bed with a candle when nobody knew.

We didn't go to tennis to-day, it's so terribly hot that even ice-cream at "Dinamo" doesn't attract us. And what is Dinamo? It is the Central Council of Sports Activities and has everything you can think of, sports grounds, running track, places for concerts, lovely restaurants, and all in a big park.

Marina and Garry are sleeping on the balcony, they may, as far as I am concerned: so many flying beetles are attracted by the light that I have no desire to sleep with them.

Just going to have a shower and go to bed. We're going

to bathe at 7 A.M. to-morrow and come home again before it gets too hot.

Your Eggü.

\* [Kira's statement proved to be correct. No newspaper would accept articles from Eddie when she visited England in 1932.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*19th July 1931*

Darlingest Bambino,

Yesterday Kira, Marina, Igor and I went bathing. I told you we were going to. It was half an hour's ride on the bus and we started at 7 A.M. hoping to get really brown by night. We succeeded; but unfortunately Kira got sunstroke so things were very hectic last night. First of all we asked Dimus's wife to come and see what should be done. She is a Doctor, and she advised cold compresses and aspirin, but as his temperature was rising so alarmingly, 103.1, she advised Garry to telephone for an ambulance. It is the only way to get an official doctor quickly. After about half an hour I heard the horn and knew that meant the ambulance was below. I felt so sick and saw all my life collapse in a heap. I felt I could live a week without sleep, as long as Kira stayed at home, but when I thought of him in a strange building, a state hospital, where I mightn't go, it somehow seemed the end of everything.

The doctor was the quaintest little person, with such a loud voice and a most elaborately fitted black bag. He tapped and listened and tapped Kira's chest. All this time Kira was delirious. Then the doctor asked me in quite a cross way whether

I didn't know Kira had a weak heart and if it wasn't stupid for him to sit long in the sun. Marina said we didn't know and that I didn't understand Russian, whereupon he became a charming jovial man and told us, sarcastically but pleasantly, we'd found a very nice spot for bathing. He jabbed a large needle in Kira's arm, gave him a powder to take and said I could keep him at home. I could have hugged him, however the ambulance sent word to hurry, so off he went saying Kira would be better soon. Half an hour later, while I was sitting changing Kira's compresses and listening to his incoherent wanderings, who should come but Ivan Vasilitch. Hearing Kira was very ill he had rung up his friend, a specialist, and got him to come, so for the third time, poor Kira was tapped, and told to breathe in and out, and eventually the specialist gave Marina a prescription to be made up, and Kira had to sit up and not lie down, and to have compresses. It was the right treatment. After an hour his temperature began to go down and he began to be sane, but he couldn't bear me to go out of the room, and after a time he slept, and only wakened once in the night, and to-day although he's better he can't walk, there seems to be something the matter with his legs and he's too weary to read science, so he's gobbled up *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and the three books you sent last and now he will sleep again. Sorry to pile all my woes on you, but I don't want to frighten Mother, and I must tell someone.

I have filled in my question list from the Consulate and really feel better for it, but I think after this scare I mustn't leave Kira until he goes to Marina in Leningrad in December, and it doesn't really matter when I come, as long as I do, does it?

It was rather amusing yesterday before Kira got sunstroke. There was a colony of small children with a few big girls to look after them. The latter wanted to know where I got my backless bathing costume from. Marina told them. Where-

upon, hearing I was English, I was bombarded with requests to come to the colony and tell them about life in England. It was quite hopeless to find seclusion after that. Everywhere we went, little groups of boys came to gaze upon such a phenomenon as an Englishwoman, even when I wanted to dress.

What were my remarks about Meyerhold that they stumped you? Meyerhold is a theatrical producer, modern, and at times startling, and everything seems to have a meaning. He will give a youth green hair, surely because a "greener" youth couldn't be found, and so on. Movement and pose are symbolic of the script and give enhanced meaning. He has his own theatre in Moscow, state-supported, and is the leader of the Revolutionary Theatre. His productions are amazing, with a flash and a bang you are right in the middle of the play and the audience following breathless. He doesn't believe in separating his audience from the actors and wants an apron stage, so in that he's like Shakespeare.

Germany seems to be in a mess doesn't it? What do you think will happen if France maintains this attitude? Seems to me Russia is well out of it.

Eggv.

[Street fighting had broken out in Germany between Nazis and Communists and many people had been killed and wounded. The struggle between Nazis and Communists was daily growing more bitter. In addition to this Germany was facing an economic crisis and did not continue to pay reparations as laid down in the Versailles Treaty. Finally there were five million unemployed that year in Germany.

France's attitude towards Germany was the realist one that Germany was a menace to world peace. France believed that Germany should be held in check by a system of alliances.

Russia seemed to be well out of all quarrels because she had treaties of friendship with France, Czechoslovakia, and



a non-aggression pact with Poland and with Germany. Also trade relations had been established with Great Britain for the past three years.

But in spite of these peaceful efforts and the many internal preoccupations of the Soviet Government it will be noted that they never ignored the possibility of war. Letter 67, written August 12, 1931, indicates that military manoeuvres were being held and the town practising a gas attack.]

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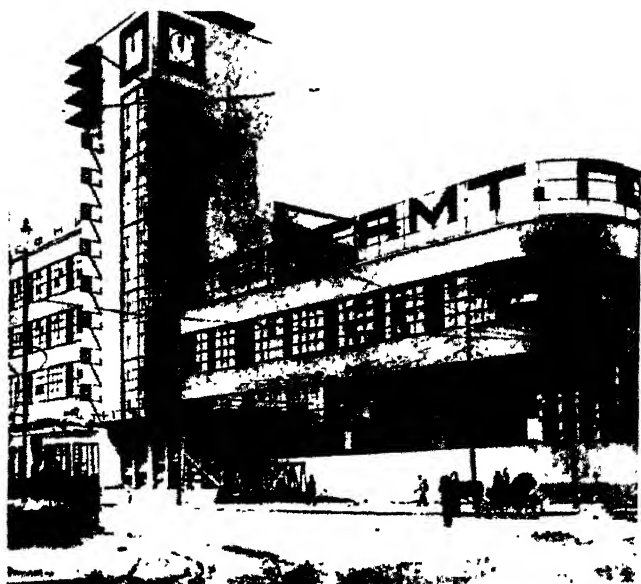
CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

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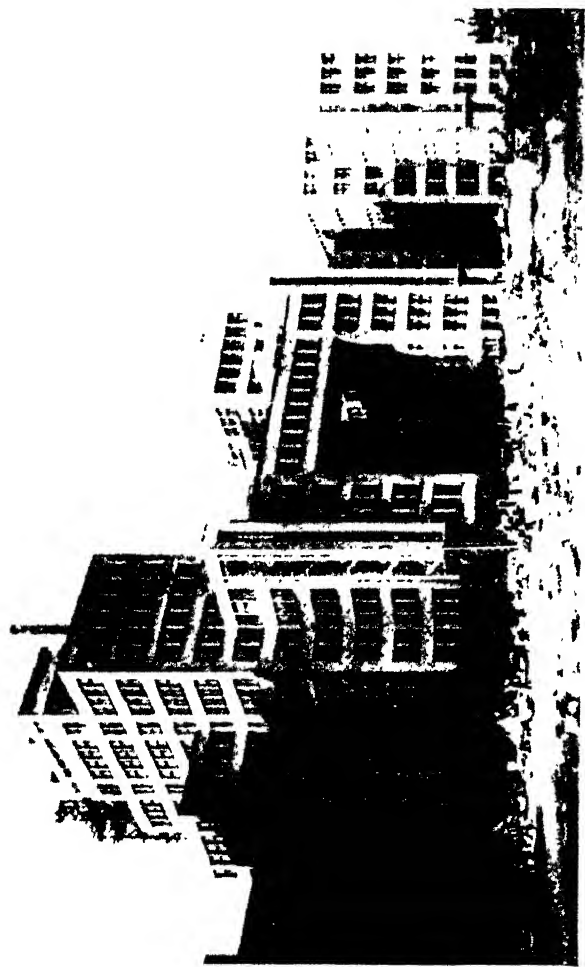
*22nd July 1931*

Dearest,

I feel on edge, I don't mean bad-tempered but just critical: and cross with myself for being so, because Feydya and Luba are really so nice to me. Perhaps it's nerves after Kira having sunstroke, and our flat being overcrowded with visitors: Marina, Garry, Luba and Feydya. Luba gave me a most beautiful runner which she had painted herself, especially for me. She is the Official designer to a factory in Leningrad where materials are stencilled. She is very artistic and very gay. Her son Valeria, who is fifteen, is with her too. She is very tired and is just going for a holiday, probably to a little place in the country not very far from here. I think that Marina must find it a great relief to have someone to whom she can talk without effort, and it's rather a blow to find that my Russian isn't as good as I thought, and that it's Marina who is so wonderful at understanding it, because I say things to Luba now, that I'm nearly sure are right, and she doesn't understand at all.



KHARKOV, 1931



KIYARKOV, 1931

The waste-land in front of the buildings was later converted into beautiful gardens.

But I do understand enough Russian to grasp the fact that Kira looks at life with different eyes from his family. Of course I know he ran away from home when he was seventeen because he was an ardent Communist and wanted to help the Revolution. I know he did that because he was so convinced Communism was right and so the comfort of his father's estate counted for nothing. But he is so kind and affectionate that when his family came to stay I thought he'd spare some time for them from his laboratory. So I was surprised that he went off and left us all. But I see now he just can't bear the atmosphere and their constant interest in material possessions. He won't say it but he thinks them materialistic. And as for Luba! When you come I'm sure you'll agree with me that it's perfectly ridiculous to go out dressed "up to the nines" in present-day Russia. Of course I know it's eternal woman longing for decoration, but surely women like to fit in with their surroundings as well? Sometimes I see a short frock that is suitable, but generally I feel scornful, for the materials are so paltry and are not in any way suitable to the "long" style, which everybody who wants to appear somebody is adopting here to-day.

Forgive this outburst, it's due to Luba's proposing to go to the country with all her magnificent wardrobe. And don't write and say it's pot calling kettle black, this time. My smart clothes are locked away and I only wear my very simplest and feel decent in this hard-working atmosphere.

I suppose I shall scandalise people in England when I come back. What shall I do? I want purpose now, not well-dressed purposelessness.

BUNNY.

PS. I'm really tired after hours of polite Feydya. He gets up whenever I appear and says "Merci" so often I'm quite bewildered.

Garry just made me laugh. He wanted to know if I could

say "Raz igorki" seventy times without "taking a fresh respiration of air." After that I couldn't.

PPS. How nice of Miss Rathbone to ask you to tea at the House of Commons and sweet of her to say that she would help about my passport. I send my forms in, the first thing in the morning. So I progress.

Oh, Marusha, soon, soon.

BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*2nd August 1931*

Darlingest,

I am enclosing two picture postcards. One is of Gosprom. Isn't the architecture impressive? It is one of the most modern buildings in the world and of course it will look still better when the waste land in front is covered with flowerbeds and grass. Kharkov is becoming a modern city now and changing daily.

We are having Dr Allibone, from Cambridge, for two days on the sixth. And Gamov wired to say he is coming next week from Leningrad. No one knows why. Then Cockroft and Webster come from Cambridge later, so we shall be very gay until September.

Really you must thank Marina and Igor for this letter, they are quarrelling so violently as to where they will go for a holiday that I think it policy to leave them alone, and as the dining-room is furthest from the study, I have brought my letters here. They came with the intention of going to Eriska, after Garry had worked a month with Kira. The

month is now up, but they hear from Luba and Feydya, who are already there, that the army is camping and all rooms are taken. Luba suggests another village. Garry, who was perfectly willing to go to Eriska, now wishes to go to Lenin-grad again as he has some work to do, in his holiday, arranging a conference in September; and also to see about their new flat in Sosnovka, the district where the Institute is. Marina is definitely against this plan as it means her going home and back to the depressing atmosphere of a mother-in-law, who is apparently all that mothers-in-law can be as antagonists.

Poor Marina, she's had such a hard life it really seems unfair that Garry's mother should be so beastly when he obviously loves Marina.

Anyhow there they are arguing and arguing and Garry has a weak heart and Marina has been ill two days. I guess Garry will win, but if he doesn't he'll be a bear and Marina won't enjoy the country a bit. They propose going to-day but as they haven't got tickets I see them sitting arguing another week.

Kira is very well at the moment, looking forward to our English visitors. We seem to be a place of call for English visitors from Cambridge.

There's quite a lot to interest visitors to Kharkov, and we discovered that the Stadium "Dinamo" is absolutely top-hole. There is an exquisite restaurant with large open-air balconies, rather expensive but quite European, and the "Profin-park" is also a nice place for an evening symphony, and brass band, concert in the open-air, with lots of places for ices and drinks. The drinks are not so interesting as English ones, only soda water and lemonade or beer, but there are delightful trees and flowers. At Dinamo there is an open-air kino, but I simply can't think why they don't make lots of bathing pools. Kharkov would be really worth while then.

I bought a large chain in the market, to fasten across our

front door, because I'm afraid thieves will break in and steal. There's an epidemic here in the Institute just now, and the night before last somebody unscrewed the locks and bolts of the attic where the flat-owners keep their cases and odd old furniture, and took all the cases that were there. For us it meant losing one trunk and six cases, as four of the cases were very old, they're not much loss but even old cases here are valuable. I'm so thankful that the two best trunks and five good cases are in the flat. Nothing more shall we keep either in the attic or the cellar however overcrowded the flat may seem. Anyhow it's no use crying over spilt milk.

Gorsky lives on a ground-floor flat, it's so hot that he couldn't really sleep with the windows shut. However a thief got in and stole a lot of things, so the next night he invited a friend to sleep under the window with a knife under his pillow.

Next morning he found the knife had been stolen from under his head as he slept, and a lot of other things had vanished from the room, so we can't say life is dull.

I have seen and heard the first Russian talkie. I don't like all of it, but it's quite worth while and very good propaganda of the sort to be encouraged, about these homeless boys who wander all over the country, stealing and damaging, and how the first voluntary commune was formed, that is the first and almost the only successful one. It isn't a real talkie, as we had at first—synchronised weren't they called?—just a little talking and some sounds with most of the footsteps cut out; and then we have seen an old silent film called *Storm* with its sequel, but the second part was futile and the girl who was said to be English in the first part became definitely a New Yorker of New Yorkers before the second part was ended. You wouldn't get that kind of mistake in a Russian film.

Oh, the argument is over and Marina with red eyes and a faint smile tells me that Leningrad has it.

*Later.*

It is six o'clock and as they're still packing and haven't got tickets we shall be able to go bathing to-morrow. The Donetz has some lovely little pools off the main stream.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*11th August 1931*

Darlingest,

Johnny Gamov has returned to Russia and Kharkov, and, being almost a resident in our flat, he's presented me with this piece of handmade paper which I immediately dedicate to you. He's just the same, so bored if we don't do things. The first days were rather jolly and we rushed about to kinos and theatres and for ices, but our pockets don't run to it for ever, and now I don't want to spend any more until Cockroft comes, fortunately Johnny is already bored with Kharkov, and is telegraphing wild messages to Dimus in Leningrad to buy him tickets for a trip down the Volga. As he hopes to go abroad again almost immediately, I don't see how he can afford it, but that's his affair. He came home simply desperately in love and planning a home for his future bride, who has almost been persuaded to come to Russia, but he's been here four or five days and is already definitely cooling off. It's a great pity, because she looks charming, a Swedish dancer, did I tell you all this before, and Johnny might become a more responsible person if married. As far as I can see he's come to Kharkov hoping to get all the advantages of the Institute without working for 'em.

I've just been correcting the thesis he intends to deliver in English at the Conference in Rome, 'orribly learned, didn't



understand a word, but if this doesn't sound like Marie Stopes I'm a Dutchman, ". . . As the fundamental proton level in radioactive nuclei is very deep, a proton would have to be very highly excited before it could be ejected. . . ."

I have written to Ania Kapitzka to get an address of a lawyer they know, who is first class on international marriage laws, and if I can't get home I want you to go and find out how matters will stand if Kira and I divorce. We, that is all the intelligent people in the Institute, have decided, that, as the British Government now calls me a foreigner, to quote H.M. Consul, a Russian divorce is valid for me, in spite of the English Registry Office marriage, and that if I divorce Kira I can once more apply for a British passport. Having secured this, I can again marry Kira here, and still keep my British nationality, because in Russia a woman keeps her own nationality on marriage. It's really a knotty question and we simply must find out just in case of emergency. If I get home I shall go just the same to find out because I'm inquisitive, will you come with me to create a good impression?

Isn't it sad? Gamov tells us that Rutherford's daughter died in childbirth the day before he was raised to the Peerage, so I don't suppose the honour meant very much to him at all.

Your BUNNY.

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KHARKOV 2

12th August 1931

Darlingest,

The town is being disturbed to-night with the alarms specially for gas attack. Certainly everyone can hear them, but I hope they don't have manœuvres of this kind often.

It is now midnight but as Ivan Vasilitch is here we are going to drink more tea.

Our scientific friend, who must be nameless, has just gone off to Leningrad to meet Dimus before going for a trip on the Volga, but incidentally he has decided Kharkov is too dull a place to live in, and in spite of being given a flat, that was prepared for someone else, and being considerably helped with his new foreign passport, by our Institute, he just says he can't stand it and that he's going to Leningrad. I don't know how Kira and Ivan Vasilitch feel about it, but it seems to me a pretty dirty trick, to come and get money and all he can for nothing, and then show his heels.

Night-night, I'm really too sleepy to write sensibly.

13th August 1931

I haven't really got anything to say but I must try. My brain otherwise is going round and round in a circle until I think I shall go mad. Cockroaches, bugs, passport: passport, cockroaches, bugs, passport, and every now and then I heave a sigh of relief and thank God that in a month or so I may be free from such worries for a bit, only to find a new worry, Kira. He'll be so lonely, poor man.

EDDIE.

16th August 1931

Kira and I have gone splash on a hammock so we sit and swing all day on the balcony, and Kira being naughty, and having only just learnt the word "vomit," it came in *Karl and Anna*, keeps telling me that's how he feels.

I hear our scientific friend is angry that the Institute won't do all for him and is going to Leningrad permanently. I'm rather glad, he seems so selfish here in Russia.

It really is the limit about the silk net isn't it? and why don't they allow S.T.'s. Russia's such a damned hygienic country I suppose. It makes me sick, one can't buy even the mildest disinfectant anywhere, nothing against cockroaches, one is given a substitute for iodine and so on, how can houses

be really, really clean? It isn't as if the soap was decent.

The note from the Tax Inspector I don't understand at all, but I think it means I can't have the tax back, because I'm not British and haven't ever worked for the Crown, so that's that. Still it was good of you to try to get my rebate for me.

Your BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

20th August 1931

Dearest Old Thing,

I'm busy because Cockroft and Webster are dining here to-morrow. Kira is so happy they are here. Though neither of us ever want to live in England, we did enjoy Cambridge days and it is great to renew our Cambridge friendships like this.

No matter what you say about our married friends, marriage has not changed me. I am just the same, except I am happier, no doubt of it, with no more ties or obligations than I wish to have and the knowledge that I can be "free," if you call getting unmarried being "free," to-morrow if I wish. This is apart from the possible convenience of divorce *re* passports in my particular case. Kira is the last person in the world to surround me "with a hot atmosphere of hate" and I am not trodden on, my darling. Can you imagine my silent and gentle Kira putting me in my place, why he almost weeps if I am blue and he very rarely makes me angry, and when we do have a minor "scandal," Russian understatement for "row," it's from two causes, either we are both tired and worn out at the end of a day, or we argue about someone else. All the same if I had any daughters I should be inclined

to agree with Mrs S. that unless they can keep their own nationality it's no use marrying a foreigner? When will the English Government see the wisdom of this?

I simply must have one good new day dress when I'm in England. Dare I run to Miss ——— in Bond Street? I want a dull red affair with Russian collar and sleeves, just to look the part you know, and I want her to make my silver evening frock fashionable again. I am sure fashions will have changed in England, there are no slaves of fashion here except a very few women no one likes.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

PS. We're all going to the latest kino in the storm now looming ahead, and to buy a *Pravda*, to read all about G.B.S. in Russia. See that Lord and Lady Astor and son are here too. Do they really think they're seeing Russia as it really is?

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

26th August 1931

Darling,

Our English visitors have been and are going away to-day, Cockroft and Webster and two other physicists and seven or eight other scientific people with two wives, not two each! My room could hardly hold them all. But after the first "Reception" they didn't all come at once, only three or four at a time. They have been very kind. They took us to dinner at their hotel, and to Dinamo for ices, in between rushing round "doing" Kharkov. They're all rather jolly and have presented me with a tin of Flit, a tin of Lysolettes, one sham-

poo powder, Parisian, one tablet of soap, specially for the hair, one tablet of Pears soap, and one block of Cadbury's chocolate, plus three lemons and a tin of coffee, so now I am very happy for a while with nice clean smells around me. Perhaps we shall get rid of bugs and cockroaches with "Flit." The visitors think things are horribly expensive apart from their trip, which was specially arranged at low prices. They pay about thirty shillings a day all found, rooms, with four or five in a room, three meals and sight-seeing. So it isn't so bad is it? But I hope it will be more amusing for you when you come, because official visitors don't see the funny side of life at all. They are quite worn out with rushing to Institutes of one kind and another. I am going to present them with little wooden whistles, painted pink and white, made by the peasants near Kharkov, and I am giving the two wives some Ukrainian cloth and wooden spoons peculiar to Russia. Webster is going to give me *The Good Companions* because I like it so. It is so very English, isn't it?

Oh, I forgot to tell you, in a bookshop near Sumskaja, I bought George Eliot's *Middlemarch* for three roubles. Considering the rouble's only worth about sixpence it's not so bad.

I've discovered my sickness and "typhoid" was due to eating cantaloupe melons, isn't it a blight, because I do adore them.

Now I'm just off to the station with the English people. One of them, from Oxford, is seriously thinking of coming to work in Russia and they're going to try and persuade ——, from Cambridge, to come to Kharkov, because his work isn't appreciated in the Cavendish Laboratory, as it is all about crystals, and crystals are a speciality of this Institute. I may say everybody is very impressed with our Institute and says it's wonderfully clean and well organised, better than the Cavendish. So you see it can't be so bad.

"I'm awa' the noo" and will finish later.

27th August 1931

They've gone.

There doesn't seem to be any more news. I'm deep in *The Good Companions*.

Love, EDDIE.

[It was part of the Soviet plan for science that the Physico-Technical Institute at Kharkov should specialise in crystals. The organiser of the plan, Professor Yoffey at Leningrad, was especially concerned with research on the strength of metals. Russia wished, as did other countries (but in Russia they pursued the idea on a national scale), to discover new metals which should combine greater strength with less weight than the metals then known and manufactured. Kharkov was important in the metal industry inasmuch as tractors and tanks were manufactured there. Kharkov was also then the capital of the Ukraine, and the Ukraine was fast being industrialised. It was therefore natural to pursue research in metals at the Kharkov Institute, which was in the centre of the factories most concerned. It is quite apparent from the letters that Kharkov and Leningrad worked in the closest union, even to exchanging scientists from time to time. Conferences of the two institutes were common and these conferences were followed with the greatest interest by professors of Cambridge University, who had after all taken no small part in training Soviet scientists.

The connection between crystals and metals is best explained by the simple statement that all solid metals consist of aggregates of crystals. Crystals in their turn consist of atoms. Kira's attempt to smash the atom at Kharkov was part of the experiments on metals. The State spared no expense to provide Kira with the machinery he required. There is an account in Letter 27 of a transformer being delivered to his laboratory. Eddie, too, refers quite often to Kira's excitement about some new theory concerning his pet crystals.

Eddie listened to the greatest scientists in the world when they congregated in her flat. She understood a great deal more about science than she pretended in her letters. It was her way to be flippant, and also her sister in England was a graduate in Law, not in Science, or the letters might have been different.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.  
11th September 1931

Dearest Marusia,

I was hoping to get home this month, but I think now I shall be just in time for Christmas, so you see it really isn't any use making plans when you have Russians to deal with. I agree with you about things moving fast in England. England off the gold standard! \* Whatever does Father say about prospects? We still very diligently read the *Observers*, but as we are still reading as per the old Government it's not very exciting.

I thought perhaps I might go through Danzig on my way back, but now I'm not sure, because Kira says the Poles like to make trouble for Russians going through their territory, if possible, and I don't want that. There often is a spot of bother between Poland and Russia, partly I believe because the Ukraine, or "Little Russia," is really a country on its own, but half belongs to Poland and half belongs to Russia.

At present Russia is keeping her weather-eye on Poland, as Poland would like to annexe the whole of the Ukraine. Of course it's a very desirable, profitable and luxurious stretch of country. I can't make out what real Ukrainians want, because they're all out for themselves—all notices, etc., are in

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Ukrainian *not* Russian. It reminds me of this stunt in Wales of reviving their own language. Perhaps they want to be independent of both Poland and Russia. I must say that peasants in Russian-Ukraine are not so ill-treated as your cutting relates about Polish-Ukraine.

This evening we are going to Obreimov's to coffee to meet a Russian just returned from Cambridge. I'm rather keen to meet this Russian, "Landau" by name, because he's in the habit of thinking aloud about the relations of husband and wife, that is are they really in love, or is it only one of them, and if so which, and why, and so on. Ania Kapitza showed him the door.

BUNNY.

PS. We must publish your letters. Oh, by the way, Kira can't forget the mattress joke, and he says to me 'e says, à la Quartermaster, as 'ow I'm so thin that it's hardly possible to lie on me. Now I arks you, Mary Hann, what would yer do with an 'usband like that.

I don't know whether I shall ever hear anything further about my passport, but as far as I can make out Obreimov was talking to the Minister of Industry about it to-day.

Kira's going off to Leningrad on the fifteenth until the 1st October, so I shall be a grass widow, so do write to me often.

Love, BUNNY.

\* [Things had indeed moved fast in England since the failure of the Darmstadler Bank and the National Bank of Germany. The immediate result had been that eight million pounds of gold were withdrawn from the Bank of England in two days in July. By the end of the month the gold withdrawn amounted to forty-five million pounds and the English pound lost its gold backing. A political crash intervened, the Labour Government could not continue in office, and



the Prime Minister, Mr MacDonald, formed a National Government with Conservatives and Liberals on the 28th of August.

The Russians were both interested and excited, not knowing where such events might lead. This time the news was not kept from the people.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2, U.S.S.R.

*21st September 1931*

Marusha,

Here I sit writing to you when there are a hundred jobs I might be doing, in fact I ought to say "should be doing," but with Kira in Leningrad till 1st October life seems so aimless, and with eight or nine more of these solitary days I'm sure I shall have time to get all the beastliest jobs in the world done.

I have been in town most of the morning trying to find the new bureau of the passport office, moved owing to building repairs, and after finding it, I sat one hour in a dark and dismal corridor with hundreds of people walking past, and was then informed that to-day is the holiday of this particular office. As you know the weekly "day-off" varies for different employment, not one day for everyone like English Sunday is. So I returned home.

I heard from Ania Kapitza by the way. Her letters are amusing, this is what she says ". . . About the lawyer, he's dead." However I've written to the Consulate once more, they'll be fed up with me soon, and asked for information without saying that I intend to divorce, but a woman at the passport office told me she's been waiting nearly a year for a

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passport and I know Levi has, so it looks as though I might have to do something drastic before I get home.

BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*24th September 1931*

My Darling,

Obreimov is being an angel. He comes and drinks coffee sometimes to cheer me up while Kira is away, and he has asked one very important person to do something about my passport, and apparently the said personage yesterday visited the Institute and asked what town in England I was going to, and Ivan Vasilitch says he hopes that something may be forthcoming "in a few days' time." But the tragedy of it all is my leaving Kira, oh, can you imagine what he will be like alone here, having to get his own breakfast and supper, and to make his own bed, poor darling, and he'll work at the Institute hours and hours even more than he does now, because it's so desolate in the flat all alone. These few miserable days have made me realise what Kira will feel when I'm gone. Enough of this.

No, I haven't begun the Russian classics because my Russian isn't up to them, and naturally they're not printed in English here. But I read English classics in Russian sometimes.

When I do get home will you come for an odd week-end to play my accompaniments and be patient while I learn something new. I shall bring my violin with me. By the way, Kira had never heard of Coleridge Taylor until I mentioned him, can you recommend something of his for Kira, it must not be too sentimental.

Your information about smoking fairly stuns me. Do you really mean to say that Mother allowed it? I don't say approved. I always felt she might drop dead at my feet if she had caught me. But I never smoke now, I suppose it's the Russian cigarettes, and when the English people came, they gave me an English one, and I hated it, though I didn't say so. I can't imagine now why I was such a devotee in Cambridge. Anyhow Mother will definitely approve of me won't she?

Russian envelopes are getting really intriguing aren't they, this is another made from a farm poster, but you must admit poster paper is stronger than the usual Russian envelope paper. Don't the carrots look luscious? The colouring is so good.

There are still six days before Kira arrives and I've got twenty roubles, the question is how long will it last. He forgot to give me his bank book, and in this Institute they are not paying salaries, lack of funds, I hope we're not going to have last autumn over again.

Now I will do a little washing, and then to dinner, I have only got tickets for to-day and to-morrow, so I guess my twenty roubles won't go far.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*25th September 1931. 11.30 P.M.*

Darling,

Knowing you always read your letters at breakfast, you'd better read this flat down on the table or you might horrify your "opposite" if they should get a glimpse of the reverse side of the page.

Obreimov has just gone and I am waiting for the water to get hot for the hot-water bottle. It's beastly cold and wet just now, every night seems to get worse.

Doesn't Kira really write me rather nice letters? I enclose it. Somehow in spite of the uncheerful news, I feel so happy to have heard from him, and you must admit it's rather original to be called "sweatiest" instead of "sweetiest." This "iest" ending is Kira's latest development in English endings.

After Ania's letter "about the lawyer" who was dead, I wrote to the Consulate, who informs me that neither Kira's death nor our divorce will alter my national status, and that if I wish to regain my British nationality in either case, I must become domiciled in the British Empire, and there file a petition for naturalisation. My hat, I'd much rather acquire still another nationality than go through that to become what I was born to be. I believe one can become Persian by paying to do so. I think Kira will be secretly pleased, in spite of his protestations to the contrary, that it's not so easy for me to divorce him, that is to regain British nationality for petty reasons.

Now, be careful how you turn this page over. Here goes. I've been so miserably lonely these days without Kira, I think I'm almost wanting to have a baby in order not to feel so desolate the next time there's a Conference, the only trouble is Kira doesn't want it to be his and inherit his weak physique and possibly T.B. He says he doesn't mind if it's someone else's as long as I love him, but, my darling, can you imagine me greeting my male friends in England with "Oh, I say, do give me a baby." Their expressions really might justify the experiment. However all this is nonsense because I'm coming home to enjoy myself and it would rather damp things. All this about the passport rather puts the cap on a yearly visit home, my trips must definitely be bi- or tri-annual, and who knows after the umpteen five-year plans

already planning, Russians may be able to travel at will.

You see from Kira's letter how definitely "Sovietsky" Kira is, that he puts his plans for work before me, but it doesn't really hurt me. He's so keen to get on, that I share the enthusiasm.

To-morrow is your birthday, I shall think of you lots and hope the telegram arrives safely, it's the first one I've sent entirely on my own. Lots of love.

Yours, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*3rd October 1931*

Darling,

The address you ask for is—"Consulate General of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, 58-60 Moorgate, London, E.C."—which I can't remember as being near Broad Street but you know London better than I, so no doubt you're right.

As for your ideas about helping me, I don't think a shindy will do anything except put me in the Soviet black book, all on account of my wanting to revisit such a capitalistic country as England, however many Mothers and Fathers I have there.

I think the Vice-Consul will be overwhelmed with you in a "sweet and charming" mood, but as far as I can see, help over this 'ere passport must be got more or less personally and not officially, comprenez?

I think Bernard Shaw's appeal might be more effective as he's so popular here just now, but I don't think he'd do anything anyhow.

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I don't think Lady Astor would bother either, or the Foreign Minister, whom I see, from a letter of Kira's four years ago, must not be written to in person, of course if Lady Astor asked him personally well and good, but I guess everything's hopeless. I must just sit and wait like other folk, and of course we have Yoffey as a last hope, that is if the passport is definitely refused, but Kira says if a passport is refused he will definitely make a scandal. Unfortunately he's of the opinion that in such a case I would be given a passport to "get out," but no *visa* and things to return here. Can you imagine Mother and Father's horror in such a situation?

Do what you think best, my darling, only be wise so that I can come home some time, I think you must definitely be charming whichever "idea" you use. It's so sweet of you to bother about me when you've got other things to worry you. I am grateful. But now Obreimov has written this letter, and Kira can still ask Sasha Lipunsky to talk to Boukharim if nothing comes of the letter, and finally Yoffey, but you know Kira doesn't want to do that, so there is hope, only it's such a long hoping isn't it?

Yours, BUNNY.

[Boukharim (currently spelled "Bukharin"), then in favour, was a personage of great importance. See note in Letter 81.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

6th October 1931

Dearest Marusia,

It isn't cantaloupe after all, but appendix. Here I've been lying this last seven or eight days and feeling sick of it and

sick of everything, because as long as I am here nothing is being done about my passport, chiefly because Kira is too worried and obviously doesn't even want to think about my leaving him and our being separated again, much less arrange for me to go.

However Marina is here. She came in answer to Kira's telegram and so I am being well looked after and have somebody to tell funny things to when they strike me, and she plays the gramophone when I want. Just now it's "Rio Rita," not very highbrow, but cheering. The doctor, Professor Himelnitsky, say that if you can, is awfully jolly and I feel much better the moment he appears. He thinks I have wonderful "organisms" to have recovered from appendicitis so quickly but wants me to think seriously about an operation later on because he is convinced this is my third attack. So if my passport doesn't come soon I shall go through with it just to pass the time. Dr Himelnitsky has been five times, and we crack jokes, or I do, in my broken Russian, and he very gaily carries on, and Kira helps, and altogether they spoil me hopelessly, although I'm not looking forward to three more days lying on my back. Enough of this.

Kira is amused, but it seems to me our money is running away very fast, twenty roubles for every visit, but I must tell you. Kira got five hundred roubles to-day for being "Prima Oodarnick" that is "first shock-worker" in American language. Incidentally Kira is a "Brigadier." Doesn't it sound silly? The doctor isn't sure now whether a sea-voyage will be good for my innards but in any case he has forbidden the journey to England for a month.

What do you think of the situation in England? \*

What will happen to me if there's inflation while I'm home? Just a longer or a shorter holiday I suppose. Surely something could be done about unemployment at home. Stalin says unemployment is abolished in the Soviet Union,

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and certainly the factories in Kharkov find it very hard to get enough labour.

Your little snaps taken at Folkestone are making a furore among all who see them, they say "kak ona kraceeva"—how pretty she is, and "kakia kraceevia nogi"—what pretty legs, and "kakia prekrasnia nogi"—what beautiful legs. So you will be quite famous by the time you arrive here. Now I'm about exhausted. I still love only Kira.

We both send love and now I'll listen to Noel Coward with his "while there's this insane music in your brain."

Your very own BUNNY.

\* [It was known in Russia that, in spite of the formation of a National Government, on the 28th of August England's financial position had got steadily worse. The Stock Exchange closed for two days and Great Britain went off the gold standard. Unemployment rose steadily. To observers abroad it must have seemed that England was ripe for revolution.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

9th October 1931

Darlingest,

I am sitting up now, and feeling in a much more amiable frame of mind. My nice Dr Himelnitsky came for the last time last night and to-day I can sit in a chair, I haven't got that far yet, and to-morrow can walk round one room, near the bed, after to-morrow round two rooms and then three until eventually I take the air, and in ten days he will be very pleased to see me at his house. Naturally he will, it means



another fifteen roubles in his pocket. It's simply beastly in Russia, when a doctor comes one must give him the money every time as he goes. He never asks for money, so it is possible not to give him any, and it's possible to give him very little, but if you do that the next time you ask him to come, he will either be "too busy" or for some other reason unable to come. Isn't it a devilish method? It's like a bribe. If one pays well enough one can always be sure he will come in an emergency, and if not, he certainly won't come. As Kira says, one can't really be friends because afterwards, if one is ill, it's rather difficult to give money to people one likes and knows very well. As a matter of fact that's why we have Himelnitsky, because Dr Knabes was a friend of Kira's father, and wouldn't take any money when he came to see Kira last year.

However we shall see what we shall see. Marina is still here and is going to the passport office for me to-day, she is an angel and utterly spoils Kira and me. But as they are going to move into a new flat soon I expect she will be going back to Leningrad in five or six days, because I will be quite well then.

At present the army are having manœuvres here and in fact a sort of "mock-war" with mobilisation and all sorts of excitements. I haven't been out, but Marina had to wait in a shop half an hour yesterday while a raid went on. Apparently it was much better organised in Leningrad, because there nobody knows about it, that is the women whose husbands haven't been mobilised, and the ones whose husbands have, all think it is a real war. While here, instead of rushing under cover at the warning signals, they all come to the doors to look.

It's taken me all this time to recover my breath after the five hundred roubles Kira was given, so imagine my surprise when I hear we are to have a ton of coal presented to us also, plus an "oodarnicks" card, which means we can go to one

special shop for "oodarnicks" where things are much cheaper.

Obreimov is playing about with the army this ten days of manœuvres, so Kira is having a lot of his work to do, Kira thinks he just wants a rest, because as Director of the Institute he could be exempted. Kira is planning a scheme of work that could be instantly acted on in time of war, as a matter of fact I think all this fuss is only to see how all the offices and factories are working.

Do write again, I'm sure there'll be time, anyhow I'll be home for Christmas.

Yours, BUNNY.

[Events proved that "all this fuss" was efficient preparation for war. When the Ukraine was invaded by the Germans they found that the most valuable machinery had been evacuated to prepared sites in far eastern Russia. The preparation in detail required years of work and the close collaboration of the scientists with the Technical Institutes.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*14th October 1931*

Dearest,

It is a simply marvellous day, warm sun and no wind, so I decided to go to the market, because on account of my appendix it's ages since I did. Of course spent lots of money, bought a mouse-trap, two cups and saucers, rather Russianified, and some things to eat. The mouse-trap has become a necessity, because for about a week or ten days we've noticed that there must be a mouse but have never seen it, and although we put the puss-cat on its track, he simply didn't do

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anything, never having seen a mouse before. However last night, after Kira and I had seen Marina to the station for the 1 A.M. train, we actually saw the little thing sitting on the bread box, so we rushed the cat to the spot at once. Imagine our surprise to see the mouse running up the wall and the cat running out of the kitchen. I thought, there's a stupid cat and fled after him, when lo and behold there he was in the bedroom on the rug not knowing where to go to eat the mouse he already had in his mouth. He took one hour to demolish it, and then was so excited he kept watch the whole night, and caught a second mouse at 7 A.M., since when he's slept every minute.

If I come by boat to London I do hope you will arrange to spend the night with me. I don't feel I want to stay in London long at first, but I do most terribly want to let off steam to you before I meet other people, so do see that Mother and Father book two double rooms somewhere. Is the Berners alright for them? I shall always like it best now because of Kira, and then we can wag our tongues off, and poor you, won't be able to work the next day. I'm quite better now, am only getting strength up for the journey. Pray that a passport will soon appear.

Kira sends his love, he's preparing for to-morrow's lecture, he's very excited about his work, they, Kira, Boris, and another assistant, have managed to get one million three hundred volts towards smashing the atom, but as they need seven million, still have a lot to do. The noise is so loud they have to stuff their ears with cotton-wool, and the spark is one and a half yards long!

Do write to me again before I come home.

Yours, BUNNY.

20th October 1931

Dearest One,

Kira seems terribly blue and depressed these days, as for me, I don't think I shall ever get home. Certainly not this year and Kira doesn't seem to care a damn. I try to hide my bitterness, and cheerfully say that soon I shall have a passport, but Marina discovered for me that on October 4th they hadn't even looked at my application, much less discussed it. Every time I go to the passport office the woman says, "No, nothing yet, come in ten days," and always I'm so afraid that she'll say something I don't understand, and Kira never offers to come with me, so I go alone. I think my only hope now is Lipunsky, and heaven knows how I can ask him, he doesn't speak English and I think Kira will be terribly offended if I ask Sasha Lipunsky on my own, but what can I do?

I'm enclosing this cutting from *The Times* that Ania Kapitzka sent, but it holds no definite "hope" for the future. I have it from the Consul himself that I am Russian now, and this article confirms it. "It is a well-established principle of English law—that on marriage the wife takes the nationality and domicile of the husband." Why should Englishmen regard wives as chattels of their husbands? Why can't Englishwomen be given more say in their own lives? Why should it be decided by the men of England that the women of England lose their nationality by marrying a foreigner? The men jolly well don't alter their own nationality by marriage. Why can't women be treated on just the same footing as men? They are in Russia. I laugh now to think how astonished you and I were in France to discover that a Frenchwoman, if married, could not have her own banking account, and had to travel on her husband's passport or not at all. We said

English law was so advanced where women were concerned. Well, I know better now.

And doesn't that smug remark annoy you? "Mr Coningsby said that the marriage [referring to Russia] could not be considered on the same footing as though it had been celebrated in a barbarous country." Thank you. But all this sense at the Law Society, does it affect the law? And how do you think I'm going to like it, when I come home and have to report all my movements and every change of address to the police because I am a "foreigner." Bah.

My appendix is quite recovered by the way, only got a rotten cold at present. The puss-cat and Kira send love and I am always

Your BUNNY.

[The cutting from *The Times*, London, was dated October 8, 1931 and is reprinted below.]

## THE LAW SOCIETY (Reprint)

### DOMICILE AND DIVORCE

#### NEW INTERNATIONAL DIFFICULTIES

*From our Special Correspondent*

FOLKESTONE,  
7th October.

The Law Society's forty-seventh provincial meeting, which is being held at Folkestone on the invitation of the Kent Law Society, was continued yesterday at the Leas Cliff Hall.

### RUSSIAN DIVORCES

#### NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN

A paper on "Some International Elements in Matrimonial Causes" was then read by Mr Francis C. Coningsby.

The rapid growth in the present century of international relationships,  
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stimulated by the movements of population during and after the Great War, Mr Coningsby said, had inevitably led lawyers to recognize the practical importance of that branch of our law, Private International Law, which had been defined as "the body of principles determining which of two or more systems of law shall prevail when they compete in any particular case." To establish the claim for the immediate practical importance of the subject of Conflict of Laws it would be sufficient to mention one branch of law only. Matrimonial causes had been chosen not merely because the family relationships which they involved had been productive for some centuries of complex questions of Private International Law, but also because there had been some peculiarly interesting and significant decisions. Indeed, to prove that point, it would not be necessary to refer back to any case before 1921.

#### NATIONALITY AND DOMICILE

That on marriage the wife took the nationality and domicile of the husband was a well-established principle of English law. As regarded nationality, several attempts had been made to secure modification of that rule. For various reasons those attempts had hitherto met with little or no success. However, feminine persistence in the matter of securing legislative reform was, since the achievement of extension of the suffrage to women, almost axiomatic. There could be little doubt that the late Dr Ethel Bentham's "Nationality of Women Bill," followed as it had been by direct representations to the League of Nations Assembly in July of the present year with a view to securing international uniformity of outlook in the matter, would be ultimately productive.

As regarded the rule in respect of domicile, in order to cope with distressing circumstances which had emerged from time to time, the Courts had stretched the law on the subject to such an extent that it was difficult to define the true position at the present day.

Mr Coningsby then reviewed the decisions in a number of important cases dealing with suits for dissolution and petitions for nullity of marriage.

Referring to the case of *Nachimson v. Nachimson* ([1930] P. 217), in which a Russian woman sought judicial separation from a Russian, who, although domiciled in Russia, was resident in England, Mr Coningsby said that the marriage could not properly be considered on the same footing as though it had *been celebrated in a barbarous country*. Clearly Russia must be regarded as a civilised State capable of making its

own laws which must receive the same respect as was shown to nations with a Christian system of laws. While the Russian principles might indeed be so novel as to strike at all accepted notions in a Christian country, dissolubility must not be made the primary test of the validity of marriage. Many States, notably in North America, permitted dissolution on the flimsiest and vaguest of grounds. Marriage in such States could not for that reason alone be treated as void by the English Courts. [Above italics are ours.—ED.]

But, sooner or later, the Courts would have to consider a Russian dissolution by consent. Their task would not be an easy one. It had, in fact, already been pointed out that the following questions, which were of indisputable importance, were left undecided: "Whether the English Courts would recognise a law of a quasi-Christian country permitting (1) a divorce without previous notice to the other spouse; (2) a divorce at will by mere registration without a competent Court or authority having any discretion to refuse it."

#### DOMICILE

In conclusion, it should be of practical interest to inquire a little into the question whether domicile, as the basis of matrimonial jurisdiction, was in fact the most convenient to meet modern requirements. The argument in favour of exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of domicile had been well stated by Lord Penzance in *Wilson v. Wilson* (1872). On the other hand, it had been pointed out that a colonial or foreigner might come to this country, take advantage of its laws, and marry an Englishwoman, with the result that if she should wish to dissolve the marriage she must go to the Court of the country in which her husband was domiciled. Here hardship might well result to the woman. If, however, the wife were given liberty to seek divorce from the *forum loci contractus*, or even from the law of her domicile before marriage, there might well be as many instances of hardship to the husband.

There could be no doubt that at one time there was a strong body of opinion in England in favour of the *lex loci contractus*. It might be suggested that *lex loci contractus* should be recognized as conferring alternative jurisdiction in respect of divorce and nullity decrees. An alternative jurisdiction was, however, clearly to be avoided if practicable, since it could readily lead to further confusion, particularly where proceedings

were commenced at about the same time, *e.g.* by the husband in the *forum loci contractus*, and by the wife in the *forum domicilii*.

Further, it had been the policy of the Courts of this country to discourage methods of rendering easier dissolutions of marriage. Hence, the special scrutiny accorded to all decrees obtained in America, where divorce was notoriously easy to procure. Comparatively few English people had the time, means, or inclination to acquire an American domicile with a view to facilitating divorce. On the other hand, if the *forum loci contractus* were known to be an alternative, many young couples desirous of entering upon an experimental marriage might arrange a prolonged holiday abroad so as to have the marriage ceremony performed in a country where subsequent divorce could readily be obtained, if desired, on some ground wholly inadequate according to English social as well as legal principles.

On grounds, therefore, of expediency, as well as convenience, exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of domicile in respect of divorce decrees would seem to be best, although, as he had shown, there were manifest objections to that. It was another question, however, whether that exclusive jurisdiction should be extended to all petitions for nullity as well as for divorce.

#### AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL

Some had suggested the setting up of "a general international court" to decide matrimonial suits in which questions of Private International Law were involved. As to that, Von Bar long ago wisely commented, "an international tribunal of the kind would mean, owing to the enormous distances at which parties might be from the seat of the Court, a complete denial of justice. Again, the decisions of all Courts on questions of Private International Law must in practice rest primarily on the legal principles of their own country, but, since in every case that came before this international Court there would probably be a majority of Judges belonging to countries different from that to which the case belonged, there would be imminent danger that the law of that country would not be respected."

*With permission of The Times.*



*24th October 1931*

Dearest,

Isn't life stupid the way such little things affect one's mood? Here was I, a perfectly happy Eddie at 11 A.M. and now, because I couldn't get what I wanted, I am disgruntled. I went to town to buy some coffee and some cakes for the doctor's daughter. After trying several shops I found one with both commodities in the window, and the cakes were the best I've seen in Russia yet, so I marched in very happily, and tried to buy. The coffee, although there are kilos and kilos of it in the windows, is not for sale, neither are the cakes, and the ones inside were positively mouldy. I certainly won't find hell a great hardship after this, will I?

I suppose you know I'm "off" Mira Borisleovna more than usual. When I was ill, Kira wired for Marina and, as it happened, the very day the telegram arrived they were returning to Kharkov, so Igor asked Boris if he would let Marina have one of their tickets, as it was impossible to get one for her at so short notice. Boris said he would ask Mira and she refused, in spite of entreaties from all our friends in Leningrad, so poor Marina spent a miserably wretched night and day imagining the worst about me and unable to come. For myself I don't mind that Mira refused, except for the fact that she upset Marina so. I haven't said more than one word to Mira Borisleovna since she returned, and I don't intend to. It's all absurd, because if she had given up her ticket Marina could have looked after Boris and the children both on the train and here, and if Boris had given up his, Marina would have been no end of help to Mira Borisleovna, so it was mere selfishness on Mira Borisleovna's part, perhaps she's afraid of losing Boris.

The doctor's daughter is just about due to arrive, but as I only got some very inferior cakes I rather hope she doesn't come. Is this proletarian? Am going to sit in the kitchen anyhow, that *is* proletarian, because it's the only warm place to-day. For some unknown reason they've stopped warming the radiators. Lord, it's cold enough for anything, but only five days more and then we shall have heat every day. And we at any rate will have coal, if only Kira will see about his prize of one ton of coal and he says he will. It seems donkey's years since we had a bath.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

80

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*2nd November 1931*

My Darlingest One,

I was awfully pleased when I saw your long envelope protruding from Kira's pocket. He always teases me before he delivers the goods and then says "It's from Marusha, let's go and read it"; so I drop whatever I'm doing, perhaps this accounts for the number of cups I've broken this year, and off we go hand in hand to read.

Your discussion of Patricia's marriage makes me think that perhaps my friends are thinking much the same thing, though quite wrongly, about mine: because, when you come to think of it, Kira and I haven't many interests in common. We meet where music is concerned, but we don't always agree then. I don't know a damn thing about physics or politics and that's all Kira lives for, except me.

Yesterday I received two parcels from Mother so I think Obreimov will be round for coffee, he can smell English coffee through the wall.

He was so impressed with the pussy-cat's "cleverness" that he borrowed him for two days, but I think all the cat caught was a large piece of ham.

Last evening I went to hear Oborin, a well-known Russian pianist, reputedly the world's finest Chopin player: he is now supposed to be better than Paderewski. He won the first place in an International contest of "Chopinists" in Warsaw, certainly he can play Chopin. But I don't like his style for Beethoven and Mozart. He's only about twenty-five or twenty-six so he may still improve. But Russian audiences are the world's worst. The concert last night was really rather like an exclusive concert in England, where only devotees are to be found. It was held in the large salon of a library here. The poor man had to wait about five minutes for silence before each new item, and after the interval people rushed about in between pieces, going to get coats and cloaks before the scramble at the end of the performance. They talked loudly and generally ignored the pianist. I wanted to shriek at them. But Kira agrees with me that concerts in Russia serve as a mannequin parade for certain types of women who frequent soirées of this kind. It seems to me that I'm giving you the impression that Russian people don't appreciate good music. They do, but the last place to see their appreciation is in a concert hall.

It's lots of little things like this, that one only sees when living among Russians, that make one realise how uncultured most of the population still is. Even apparently refined and well-educated people let you down with a bump in this respect, you begin to think "Well, at last here's someone really nice," and then, just some little slip, which is not a slip for them of course, and all your ideals and ideas go clattering down. This is definitely "Bunny Snob" talking, but although I notice all this, and although some things make me wince, I'm not sorry that I came to Russia except for one thing only, that it took me away from you.

I've been making Kira a little surprise to-day, you know one of those "IN—OUT" things to put on the door, like this: Each little gadget has a knob, a match head, and slides in and out, and the rest of the gadget is covered with copper, and Kira's name in black letters on the copper, all in Russian. He's delighted with it. I made it in the laboratory. Such fun covering things with copper.

My puss-cat has found a mistress and brings her home to rush madly in and out of all the rooms. She is at present calling him from the stairs, but it's too late for him to be out.

I had a letter from my god-daughter to-day. She writes "Beings as your happy I is sure I am"; so I end that way too.

BUNNY.

PS. What price the "National" government? \*

An American who works here thinks there will be a Revolution in Germany this winter. I don't think it will be so soon, nor does Kira, but it must come eventually. And the sooner something of the kind happens in England, the sooner I shall be able to pay frequent visits home without all this passport business. So hurry up and get revolutionary!

EGGU.

\* [The General Election in England had been held six days before, on the 27th of October, 1931. The result was for a National Government, who held a large majority. After V-E day, in the Fall of 1945, England elected a Socialist Government.]

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*6th November 1931*

Darling,

I posted two letters to you to-day, but I'm air-mailing this because I hope it will arrive before them, and I'm hoping that you haven't already appealed to B. Shaw or Lady Astor, or made a scene in the Consulate, because I think I shall get a passport fairly soon now. Sasha Lipunsky has been talking to Boukharim about it and Boukharim \* says that if the Institute will write to him, he's certain it can be arranged. Also the Minister of Industry has wired to Moscow, so my nose is in the air.

Please send me a five-pound note, put it in the middle of a fat letter, stick it with a wee bit of stamp edging, so you won't have to register it. I want to get one or two things, soap, etc., for Kira at "Torgsin" before leaving and without his knowledge. He has just gone to Kiev for three or four days, and I feel beastly lonely already.

I've had a letter from school. They want me to give a lecture on Russia when I come home. I'd much rather play them my balalaika. Did I tell you I had learned to play one? Talking is really beyond me.

Kira is in Kiev I suppose by this, and with luck will be back to-morrow. We are at present in the throes of preparations for to-morrow's national celebrations. The world seems one red splodge, as no doubt it will eventually be.

Always yours, BUNNY.

\* [The famous Būkharin, for a long time highly regarded by Lenin. His leadership of the Right Deviation of the Communist Party brought him into opposition to Stalin, who gave him many warnings, including the striking one in 1929, that

his associates were "hugging him to death." "An obliging bear," Stalin said to him, "is more dangerous than an enemy."]

## 82

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*8th November 1931. Celebration Day*

Dearest,

Kira has gone to Kiev, and I felt so awfully lonely the first evening that I went to Mrs Gerisamovitch. She is nice. So I invited her to come and keep me company the next evening, as Mr Gerisamovitch is away too. I was busy preparing a supper dish that afternoon when the bell rang and the Americanised Russian, Mr Podolsky, appears and asks if his wife is here. As I wasn't even expecting him I was rather surprised; however, denied her presence quite politely and gave him tea. Then he calmly says he'll bring his wife in the evening. He did. I've not fallen a victim to her charms, chiefly because she is that unfortunate type of American who is always exclaiming that something, whatever the topic of conversation happens to be, is more delightful, or more colourful, or more marvellous, or hotter, or colder, or bigger, in America, until my head is just in a whirl. She and her husband are to have Dimus Ivanenko's flat, but as Dimus's things are still there, and as the Dimus family have been away more than a month, of course things are dusty and the place has a hang-dog look, but she insists on its being the filthiest place she ever was in and refuses to sleep there until it has been cleaned. So here they are, running in and out of my flat, eating in my flat and sleeping in my flat, and altogether overwhelming me with the best or worst example of

patronage it's ever been my experience to meet. I shall be awfully glad when they are settled in their own flat, though I'm afraid even then the process of showing me how things ought to be done will still continue. It's all damn silly to you no doubt, but they are so patronising. Obreimov says they're philanthropic and that as I have ceased to be capitalist in outlook I object to their capitalist manners. Anyway I've been here nearly two years so naturally I haven't got heaps of silk dresses and pyjamas. "Americans do have such nice things," she says, as though English people don't. She's got a fixed idea about Russia being uncultured, but what's the use of talking about it.

We've just heard the Dimus Ivanenkos have a daughter, and so to bed, and so I hope, soon home, but with October celebrations all business has stopped for two days. I didn't walk in the Procession to-day—too soon after my appendix to be on my feet all those hours.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

83

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*14th November 1931*

Dearest,

Sorry I can't satisfy you as to the Russian view of the English elections. I gather, but this is merely "gathering" and not definite knowledge, that the general idea is that a revolution is ahead for you, but I guess there's about ten years before it takes effect, and Germany will apparently go dashing along in two or three years, and not so soon as the Podolskys think.

"Things is about to 'appen" in the Institute, but I'll keep

it until I see you, I'm not sure that I can write it. I'm going to bed because I haven't an idea in my head. I'm simply swamped with Podolsky-ism "bigger, better in U.S.A." I shall be glad to escape for two or three months.

Night-night.

BUNNY.

16th November. 6 P.M.

I don't seem to get on with this letter very well, but with so many visitors, there doesn't seem a minute to call my own. Pavlusha Kobeko's mother has just arrived. She is ever so old, but works with her husband. They clean transformer oil through a hydraulic press with earth, or something like that. Anyhow they've been dashing about to the various electric stations in Ukraine, returning between whiles to Kharkov, though heaven knows why. Until their present visit they've either had a flat in the Institute or have stayed with the glass-blower in the Institute, but they feel they've overstayed their welcome this time, so I said they could have a room in my flat to-night.

I wonder why I do these things: because they're so Russian peasant type and are oblivious of certain elementary niceties. One thing amongst others they will not rinse the hand basin in the bathroom after they've used it and don't even bother to empty it. It's silly to mind these little things so much, but I do. It's probably only for one night or two at most, so we shall soon be free again, and I like Pavlusha very much so I suppose I do it for her.

The Americans lent me *A Passage to India* and *Stories from Soviet Russia*. Dent's published the latter, so if you get it I'll make you a present of it.

I stood and froze in a queue for kerosene an hour or more to-day, and then felt so ill I just came home, damn silly because another half an hour and it might have been my turn, but I'm not so Russianised that I can wait for ever.



Kira's giving a lecture, but he should be in bed, even he admits it, so he's pretty rotten. I do hope he'll be alright while I'm away.

Write soon, this is a stupid letter but I'm not in the mood.

BUNNY.

## 84

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*19th November 1931*

My Darling,

I really must write just to tell you how civilised Russia is becoming, because to-day for the first time I have seen and bought some articles of toilette previously unknown to Russia. Anyhow I feel quite thrilled and that life will be really worth while. I suppose in about ten years' time, that is 1941 or 1942, Russia will be the best spot on earth. [Germany invaded Russia June 22, 1941.] It is now, in some respects, but not in creature comforts yet.

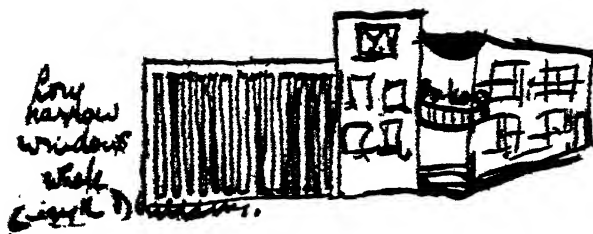
Kira's a naughty boy staying up till 5.30 A.M. with his scientific calculations and having to get up at 8.30 to lecture, and working in the laboratory until midnight.

Yesterday I was in town and walked home up Oolitza Karl Libnechta. There are two very magnificent buildings just being finished. Oh, they really are marvellous, I feel so full of emotion when I look at them, they're like some great ships rearing their heads above a lot of dirty smoky tugs. One belongs to the G.P.U. and the other to the Central Communist Party of Ukraine. The latter has one part which detracts from its beauty, but as it is a renovation no doubt the construction couldn't be altered. It looks something like this. Do you like my drawing?



Kira and I disagree about this bit, he says there's an interesting arrangement here with windows but I can't remember it. Anyhow this bit underneath the lettering is marvellous. It is almost completely glass and the door just a small simple glass one opening in a large sheet of glass, and just above a nice balcony which I think goes round the corner but can't remember, then a few steps farther there's the new automatic telephone station, quite small but interesting.

I must go and cook a meal now and stop romancing, but



I think when you come to Kharkov it will have more interesting buildings than when we first came.

Write soon.

BUNNY.

*22nd November*

Kira and I have one rouble between us and starvation. I've got thirty French francs, but heaven knows they won't buy much. I can't think why there must always be difficulties with money in the autumn! we are only now receiving the money for October, and in the Technological they owe for two months or more.\*

Heaven knows when I shall post this because I daren't spend even fifteen kopeks on a stamp until I'm sure I don't want it for something else.

*Next day*

Kira and I are so penniless, not so penniless as last night, we now have thirty roubles, that I have decided I must "turn to" and stop being a lady, and we must live on rations, that is two biscuits and one sweet per cup of tea, less meat, no ducks, and oh, how she sighed, no chickens and no expensive sweets however I want 'em. Anyhow when they pay us there'll be enough for my fare home.

When I told Kira what you said about the "stable Government" in England lasting for the next five years and that some hoped the National Government would last twenty-five years, all he could say was "How naïve."

The dolls sound most exciting and I hope you'll make one for me, but you must completely cover it with pins, they're a scarcity here.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

\* [The government were again paying for the harvest, which had been poor, owing to drought. This year, too, a

great deal of money had been spent buying large numbers of breeding stock from England and setting up stock farms throughout the Soviet Union. So once more, the Russian workers had to go without pay until national finances were easier again.]

## 85

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

*1st December 1931*

Darling,

It's December 1st and I haven't heard anything further yet, and when I do get a passport, I've still got to get a visa and then apply for a ticket, and such things as posts and trains and boats, and snow and ice have to be taken into account. Isn't it sickening, it looks as though I shall be indeed spending a solitary Xmas, because Kira is going to Moscow on the third, and afterwards he goes to Leningrad and Garry is sure to persuade him to stay and work for a fortnight or three weeks, and here I shall be just eating my heart out. I'm a stupid creature but I loathe the idea of Xmas quite alone, and Kira will forget and not even send a wire or anything, because Christmas doesn't exist in U.S.S.R.

The mother of Pavlusha Kobeko came to spend two nights again, and found me a man who will go and stand in these awful queues for me. You've no idea how sick one feels standing hours in a freezing wind. Sometimes I stand three-quarters or one hour and then just feel I don't care a damn if there's kerosene or not, and just trot home like a dog with its tail between its legs, all sad and miserable like.

I don't know what we're paying two hundred and seventy-eight roubles for heating for, because it's terribly cold in the

flats, nine or ten degrees every morning and never more than fourteen degrees Centigrade. Can't think why, because the first days they managed twenty degrees. But nobody does anything, and we've had no gas for one and a half months owing to a water lock, but again nobody does anything, and the electricity goes off every evening at 8.15 for two or three or four hours, so we just trickle to bed in utter darkness, at least I do, because Kira has to work, and we have only one kerosene lamp.

This isn't a very cheerful letter.

Love, BUNNY.

I've sent your letter to Kira, he's in Leningrad. I read it. I agree with you about Russian machine films, but why don't you make a "scandal," Russian for row or fuss, and get the film called *A Ticket to Life* or *A Pass to Life* shown in England? It's propaganda of course, but it is more worth while than wheels, and more wheels. I understand it's quite the rage in Berlin.

Tbor, Thy, EGGUK, EDDIEK.

86

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 2

10th December

Dearest,

Talking of castor oil, in Russia we have little capsules of gelatine filled with the stuff so it's not bad to take, that is if one is a pill swallower, and I am if I get a sweet afterwards. But generally speaking, enemas are used in Russia and drugs hardly ever.

I hope if I get the chance of dining with your friends they won't be very insistent on my drinking wine. I can get any amount of wine here, but I cannot get lemons, they've disappeared again, and I mean to guzzle lemonade all the time I'm home, whether it's done or not.

Have you found a dancing partner for me yet? Someone who won't mind a slightly wild and uncivilised creature.

Am just going to bed, just heard from Mother, she's ill and I'm blue, life's just hell being stuck.

BUNNY.

87

*11th December 1931*

Darling,

I got my passport this very day, and hope to start the day after to-morrow. Don't know until I arrive in Leningrad whether I can go by boat or not, that is whether the sea is frozen or not, but will you lend me some pyjamas for the nights in London? I shall bring the least possible luggage with me, and I shall be more than a week on the way.

Perhaps it would be better if Mother didn't come up to London as she's been so ill. Try and persuade her to stay at home. I shall probably arrive Christmas day.

I'm coming the first possible day. I leave you to arrange everything for me. I must report at the Consulate immediately I arrive.

Your very excited BUNNY.

*13th December 1931*

Darling,

I've had my passport two days and hoped to start to-day, but things are not so easy as you'd think. The silly people have put on my passport that I can only leave Russia either by Leningrad or an unknown spot called Bigosolo, nobody seems to have heard of it, and as there are already no boats from Leningrad I have to find this spot, and Intourist here doesn't know any more than I do where Bigosolo is.

So I've got to find out from the Moscow Intourist what route I must take to get to Hamburg. I think Hamburg will be simpler because if I go to The Hook it means another visa and more time. Also I must ask whether I can get a ticket right through to England or only to Hamburg. I must also find out where I can have some English money sent to, because obviously I can't get from Russia to England overland, without a cent. So all this is taking time. Then I've got to go to Moscow and get all the visas. That will take me several days. If I started to-day I could be home by Christmas, but I think, considering how complicated Christmas and New Year's Day travel is in England, my safest plan will be to start from here on January 1st, that is from Moscow, or as soon as I have the necessary papers and knowledge. Thus I shall be home January 4th or 5th, perhaps the 3rd, and as I arrive in Harwich our plans for a night in London first are "kaput." I'll wire one hour before I start.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

[Eddie's parents, her sister and one woman friend stayed the night at the Great Eastern Hotel in order to meet the early train arriving 7.30 A.M. from Harwich. It was cold and dreary, and as the train drew in a very thin but still smart-

looking girl leapt out. She had very little luggage. She turned straight to her mother, put her head on her shoulder and wept.

Then all trooped into the hotel and had a gorgeous English breakfast, grapefruit, porridge, bacon-and-eggs, toast, butter, marmalade, and coffee. Eddie exclaimed constantly at the plenty, the cleanliness, the quiet waiting, the fresh whiteness of the table-cloth, the thick carpets, the warmth, and the settled, age-old comfort of England.

Up in the bedroom of a West End hotel it gave her sister a queer feeling when, before saying anything, Eddie carefully opened the door to see if anyone was listening. "Don't worry," she said, "it isn't like that at all in Kharkov, but I've just been staying a fortnight in Moscow."

All that day she played with the hot-water taps, but she never caught them out, they were always hot. At night she exclaimed at the fresh supply of clean towels and soap, at the heavy silk curtains drawn across the windows, and the rich bedspread, folded away, and the hemstitched linen sheets turned back ready. But before she got into bed she ripped all the bedding off, on to the floor, and turned the mattress over. At sight of her sister's astonished face, she stopped and burst out laughing and said, "Of course, you don't do it. I'd forgotten I was in England. In Russian hotels you always look for bugs before you get into bed." Her sister helped her remake her bed and for a minute could think of nothing at all to say.

In bed, she described her journey from Moscow. Not allowed to bring any money out of Russia, which sounded so odd to oblivious English ears of 1931, she had been provided with meals from the Russian frontier to Berlin by an English engineer.

Like every man who ever met her, doubtless the English engineer had found Eddie very attractive. Her smart slim figure, her vivacity, the gay twinkle in her dark eyes, the



humorous tilt to the corners of her mouth, her young boyish face and Eton-cropped hair, and her voice, so exciting in its range of tone, suddenly dropping from its clear ringing quality to a rich depth of humour when her quick mind foresaw or remembered a fraction sooner than the average one could do. But her hands, more than her face, revealed her true capability. Long-fingered, firm hands that steered the driving wheel of a car with the same finger-tip precision that marked the strong sensitive quality of her violin-playing. It was this range of quality, this variability of mood, the sudden turns from sheer nonsense to soundest common sense, that made her so attractive to her Russian friends, who had expected an English girl to be more staid and much less *sympathique*.

To her English friends, perhaps her chief attraction was that of being so unconscious of all her qualities: that plus the fact that she never seemed to think of herself. In school and college days she put her friends before herself, and when she married, it was her husband's life that mattered first, his health and interests came before her own. Without in any way losing her own personality and interests, she was big enough to absorb his also.

Her sister must have thought of this while she listened to the excited chatter. Eddie had telegraphed from Moscow to Cook's in Berlin, to send a courier to meet her. Her father had sent twenty pounds to Berlin for her to pick up there. She found the courier, who looked her up and down and said, "What do you want to do first?" "Well, first I must get my money and then buy powder and rouge and get myself presentable." The courier laughed and said, "Yes, you look a bit shiny." The first branch of Cook's drew a blank for the money, however the courier took her on to another and they located her father's *dot*.

Though she returned outwardly the same smart English girl, her friends felt that she was no longer English. She had absorbed so completely the Russian way of thought and life.

And, in spite of all the hardships it then entailed, it was shining clear that she preferred it to the comfortable thought and life that had been always hers in England. If she lunched with friends in the West End she would take the menu, put it in an envelope, and post it off at once to Kira. "I wish he could be eating this lunch," she used to say. "Isn't it unkind to send him the menu if he's hungry?" "Oh, no, he wants me to. He likes to think of me eating good things." "How on earth can you go back to such a country?" "Because it's so much nicer than England." "What?" "Nobody worries in Russia, things will be better at the end of the Five-Year Plan, it's only just for the time being, then everything will be all right. In England you have all you want now in your own lives, but every one of you worries about the future. There'll always be food and plenty in England, but not for you personally unless you have the money to buy it. You capitalists save up for the future and your old age like so many squirrels hoarding nuts for the winter." She made a funny little *moue* as she spoke and her quick fingers scrabbled on the table-cloth like a busy squirrel. We all laughed, but felt a little sore at being likened just to animals. "And what will happen to you in Russia when you are old?" "Oh, the State looks after that, there will be pensions for all," she said. "And if you are ill?" "Oh, then, hospitals are free, and people get some pay if they are off work. Russian hospitals are the best in the world." This piqued the Editor, who knew quite well that one of Eddie's reasons, not expressed in her letters, but openly avowed on arrival, had been to have her appendix out in England. "Then if Russian hospitals are so much better and more up-to-date than ours, why didn't you stay there to have the operation?" But Eddie was unshakable. "Because I had to get nourished again before having the operation." The point was conceded and scored one for England. Her friends intended to score another point too, they had no use for a social system that reduced every one

to a common level of the lowest and regarded all men as equals. "That's not bolshevism, you ass, that is socialism. No one in Russia pretends every one is equal, they know jolly well they are not. But every one has an equal chance from the word go, what happens to them is in their own hands, if they do great service to the State they are paid more than people who do less good to the State. People are paid according to their worth, not according to their social standing. People can't make employees work long hours, pay them less than they would pay their own children, and pocket the profits. The State owns everything and uses the profits for every one. In capitalistic countries people can make money just because they buy and sell money all day long on the Stock Exchange. Parasites. What good do they do the State? Do you think those people are worth more than doctors, scientists, musicians, writers? The stock exchanges in Russia are all concert halls, or meeting-places, or clubs, and the country goes on." "Yes, in poverty." "Yes," she would say; "in poverty now, but in ten years' time no one will be hungry and cold in Russia, and they will be in capitalistic countries. You Christians are all the same. 'The poor ye will have always with you.' That's why Russia doesn't encourage the church, and its comfortable state of mind, and its belief in charity of rich for poor. There should be no poor except the bone idle."

Eddie enjoyed herself in England, staying with her parents, her friends, the quiet and the certainty of warmth and food. She recovered very quickly from her appendix operation and by Easter openly pined to go back to Russia. Her desire to return to her husband could be understood. The rest was still surprising to people who had never heard nor read one word about Russia since 1917 and vaguely regarded it as the home of evil Rasputins who caused innocent royal families to be shot, and who knew nothing of the terrible wrongs that had had to be so terribly righted. "But the surgeon uses his knife and English economic theory preaches the

greatest good for the greatest number even if it does not practise it," said Eddie. Meanwhile it was indicated that the first Five-Year Plan had progressed beyond even Russian expectation, for her husband informed her that a meeting of the Academy of Science in February 1932 decided to open branches of the Academy in the Urals, in Kazakstan, and in the Far East.

She mentioned the fact lightly, airily, waved it like the feather in her jaunty little hat.

In Germany, Hitler had not yet ousted Hindenburg.

How could Eddie know that this decision of her husband's Academy of Science was to save her life in 1942, as the life of Russia would be saved in 1942, by plans of eastward expansion and development, put into execution in 1932. "The plans will succeed," she said. And the feather waved jauntily, victoriously.

So Eddie returned eager and happy to Kharkov in May 1932, almost ten years to the day before it fell under Germany's murderous attack. She wrote ecstatic accounts of her meeting with Kira and the way the Institute fêted her return. She felt once more she could breathe freely and live more naturally and gaily, laugh and be unconventional and worry about nothing except bugs and Kira's health.

Her sister saw her go with deep sorrow, but the summer comforted her. In lovely Lakeland country she became engaged to an Englishman she had long admired and who in his turn had never dared to hope he could wrest such an ardent social worker from her career. Just before Christmas, 1932, they were married, and went to live in one of England's lovely period houses, near the moors, and with a garden that looked down over a village where a wide stream flowed beside the main street and every cottage had its own bridge to its own front door. Life passed smoothly and serenely, days spilled into days of deep contentment and the new life was all-absorbing. When letters came from Russia

they were briefly answered. There was a sharp passage of arms between the two sisters concerning the trial in Moscow of the English engineers, whom everyone in Russia believed to be guilty, with the same force and conviction that infused England's belief in her own countrymen's innocence. So the letters were not put in the chest where the previous Russian letters lay neatly tied in bundles. Instead, at the Christmas of 1933, the letters of the past eighteen months were lost in the removal to another house, where life flowed on just as smoothly, but where local responsibilities increased and time for letter-writing further decreased, and farming, agriculture, and gardening were the topics of the day. But Eddie wrote faithfully, though at less length, and her letters came to rest in a pigeon-hole in an old bureau in the chintz drawing-room.

In that drawing-room, as in so many other drawing-rooms in England in 1934, Hitler's rise to power was hardly noticed. But in Russia tension grew as Japan began openly to associate herself with Germany and the Russians began to support China against Japan. There is just a hint of the thought of war in Eddie's letters during this year; but apart from this undercurrent of fear that war would come, these letters are filled with the feeling of well-being and comfort that slowly pervaded Russia with the success of the Five-Year Plans. By 1934 the second Five-Year Plan was succeeding beyond all doubt. Gone are the days when tea was made seven times and they were grateful to eat potatoes. Gone are the days when there was no money even to buy a stamp. The self-sacrifice and patience of these Soviet citizens was rewarded. "I've just blued three hundred roubles on some fawn artificial silk."

1934 struck another happy note, for the ill-feeling which had existed between Great Britain and Russia since the trial of the six English engineers was ended. On the 16th of February a commercial agreement was signed between the two countries. So that it became possible for Eddie, in her now

official position as Gardening Advisor to the Scientific Institute at Kharkov, to order large quantities of seed from England to convert the large open spaces of waste land into gardens. Formal flower-beds, long herbaceous borders, groups of flowering shrubs, rose-trees, and even grass, took root in the foreign soil of Russia. The Institute became very proud of the results, as they said so prettily, "of English seeds in English hands." The English girl was working for her admired U.S.S.R. and the eager warm-hearted Russians were quick to appreciate it. From now on she was one of them, taking her part in their Plan, giving to Russia what England had taught her.]

## 89

[*To her sister's husband.*]

KHARKOV 24

11th January 1934

Dear John,

I do wish that you could both come to Russia now, you would have such a complete rest from farming, even the soil not being visible here, much less all the little plants that seem to compose your lives. It's really beautiful to-day, freezing hard, with no wind, and so clean and clear and blue, and the rare smoke, blueish too, is going surely straight to heaven from a snow-covered earth.

I can't write a lot about agriculture because I know little about it and in any case it's all hibernating, but just wait till the end of March when I start poking all my seeds in, then you'll get reams.

I'm sorry you disapprove of my letters to Marusha, tell-

ing her about my stupid private life. I know it's stupid, but I'll get over it, and in the meantime my sister is the only person I can write to freely. You can't very well imagine my telling Mother about my would-be children can you? Anyhow you can already be less annoyed. I have given up my friendship with O. V. and I have won Kira over to my view *re* a family, so unless some other damn fool rolls along, everything in the domestic garden is lovely and I shall be left with only my flowers to get excited about.

A happy New Year and my love to you both,

EGGU.

PS. It is not strictly accurate to say I have won Kira over. Really it was Dr Ebreure, who told Kira that unless he agreed to my having Kira's children, I would have a serious nervous breakdown. So that did the trick.

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[*Enclosed with last letter.*]

KHARKOV

11th January 1934

Darling,

I meant to write for so long, but haven't been in the mood. I've written a little note to your husband, but I'm sorry he feels like that about my letters, because now I don't feel I ought to write about my private "affaires" even to-day, only I've bottled it up so long. Anyhow at present it looks as though I'm getting through the wood.

But the biggest news is that Kira has given his consent to my having twenty children if I want. If he goes back on his

word this time I shall leave him. But he seems just as much in love as four years ago, so of course I never shall. But having won the battle of children with Kira I now have to win the battle with myself. I don't know definitely till after tomorrow the result of the X-ray photograph. If the operation has been successful I shall go ahead on the first of the twenty. But if it's not, and this is the second time I've had the operation, because the first time it was quite useless as my nerves were in an appalling state, if it's not, then I start on a cure with massage and mud baths.

I thought last week that I'd have a nervous breakdown. The doctor was worried and Kira distressed, but now I'm alright. My doctor, Dr Ebreure, his Christian name is Yebnin, invited me to go and spend a morning with him in the clinic at the X-ray Institute, as a cure for my nerves, which were apt to give way in floods of tears for no reason whatsoever. I agreed, and lo and behold he presented me with a white overall and allowed me to assist him with all the consultations. I think all the women were very impressed and thought I was a foreign specialist, since Dr Ebreure called me "Sister" or "Doctor England." I don't know what they would have said if they knew that I was a patient along with themselves and had never before had such an intimate view of "woman, the patient." However I tried not to smile, and handed bits of wadding on the end of forceps, and switched the light on and off as required, and said yes and no when I thought it was required, and went home absolutely on the top of a wave. Dr Ebreure was trying to persuade me to take up Gynæcology with him with the idea of being his nurse, but I'm not keen. It means having my freedom curtailed and probably means mobilisation when harvesting time comes round again, which means leaving Kira, which means illness and worry, so I guess I'll fight my own battle trying to have an infant.

I have had no end of amusement as well as annoyance out



of the maternity campaign. For instance Dr Ebreure sent me to the leading Gynæcologist in Kharkov and therefore in the Ukraine. A friend of Kira's told me he was rather old but that he was a brilliant doctor. I went.

He lives in the oddest little old wooden Russian house. On being admitted into the little hallway, which in the usual manner here was full of boxes, buckets, baths, and general impedimenta, I was almost distracted to know how to keep a serious face, for, hanging on the coat-rack were, all naked and unashamed, two pieces—not even whole ones, but just two pieces—of “sausage.” I didn't know whether to put my coat over them and hide them, or just leave them in their nakedness and hang my coat further along. On second thoughts I did the latter. Then I went into the waiting-room. It was minute, and all the chairs, they were obviously “period” pieces, were wrapped in covers. Such tables and cupboards that couldn't be covered had a layer of dust through which the gilt decorations bravely tried to shine.

After a quarter of an hour's waiting I was shown into the great “presence.” He sat writing at a desk on which burned one lamp under a green shade. He wore a spotless, and obviously new, white coat and for a moment continued to write. This gave me time to take a second breath for he was not old, but young and almost a replica of your favourite film star. The room, which was of noble proportions, was, to the last inch of space, completely covered and filled with furniture and pictures which must be of untold value. I was reminded of the most congested room of that little Museum and Art Gallery at Port Sunlight. Do you remember the one where there were lots of Napoleonic relics? I couldn't decide afterwards whether it was a compliment or otherwise to be asked to disrobe among such genuine works of art, but I did think it no end of a joke to lie out on the most up-to-date chromium-plated medical-chair waving my legs in the air, while the great Professor propounds his theory, and over my head two

soldiers on horseback have a fight in the snow. I'm not sure that this picture was as valuable as the gold frame.

Then of course there's my own doctor, Dr Ebreure, asking me the English for "I love you" while preparing to operate on me: or again, having an X-ray photograph in the nude taken by a man whom I had met socially at the Sanatorium in Odessa. Now don't go and be silly and start sending hectic telegrams asking did Kira have to go into a Sanatorium or have I got T.B. Because a Sanatorium in Russia has nothing to do with beds and open air and tuberculosis. It means hotel or holiday camp for workers and they are generally mansions or ducal palaces, built in the most beautiful districts and now open for the enjoyment of all State workers. But to return to Dr Ebreure, we never were introduced, for to be truthful we met first of all at the Hairdresser's in the Sanatorium, where we had a long conversation while waiting half an hour for a turn.

These people don't know yet what's the matter with me, but they will find out, they are brilliantly clever, and then, they all assure me, I shall have a "malinky bebe," little baby, and pat me gently on the head as though I were going to perform some original trick. I am grateful to Obreimov, he started me off on this business in the clinic, and now Kira knows about my daily visits to the clinic all is O.K., and I feel at peace with the world.

EGGU.

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KHARKOV

*30th January 1934*

Marushka,

I've got your letter in front of me. What material are you thinking of sending? I've forgotten even mentioning it.

If it was for curtains I've just blueed three hundred roubles on some fawn artificial silk for the living-room. I've got the curtains up and they look quite elegant if you don't go too near. Everybody is aghast at paying so much, when newspaper would serve the same purpose. But Kira is frightfully pleased, and that's all that matters. It took thirty yards.

I don't know how you arranged permission for the seeds to be sent or whether it's possible to send other things in a like manner. If it is you might let Mother know. She was asking me and I'm ignorant, except that the seeds arrived safely. Perhaps you'll be able to send some more before the spring, if so send several packets of lavender and primrose, I want a lavender border and primroses round the grass patch and some things for a herbaceous border and some green peas, I have enough lettuce now so give it a miss next time and send more parsley. How about the bill? I hope you are subtracting it and any other seeds you send from our mutual account.

We have got our brick fireplace built in at last, and it burns marvellously. The tall spiral of smoke from our chimney on a windless day shocks some of the Germans, who say "It is wrong to start a smoke nuisance in a city that doesn't have open fires . . . smoke from closed stoves is different!"—but all the Russians come to look at it and express delight at such a novelty like a picnic outdoors, indoors. The fireplace does look "bricky" and dirty, but the warmth makes up for all. I say, if a few odd pounds will make any difference to you, darling, for that oyster-wood bureau take it off the debt and forget about it. I don't want to pile up money in England. It's no use to me. I almost think I'll not even try to get home. I don't know where to begin with my applications and the disappointment of not getting a passport after applying would be so awful.

I've started my cure of massage and mud baths.

Lots of love and good wishes, BUNNY.

[In a letter to the Editor, Eddie tells the rest of the story about her fireplace. When it was built there was some question as to whether the flue connected with a chimney on the roof, or whether there was no chimney. The workmen would not climb on to the roof of such a high building. "But I *must* know," said Eddie. The ladders were fixed and she climbed up herself.]

## 92

KHARKOV 24

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

26th February 1934

Dearest,

Thanks very much for your letter yesterday. I'm glad some more seeds are coming, but I fear you can't have got my list yet with other special flower seeds in I wanted, still perhaps you can send a third parcel. I was already growing my mustard and cress on a flannel, nobody in Kharkov believes that it will grow but "I'll learn 'em." Can't believe that it's watercress time, or in fact any growing time out of doors, extraordinary how I've forgotten that spring is so much earlier in England.

You and John must live an amazingly cheap life, since you own all those acres of fruits and vegetables. I told Obreimov about the sweet-tasting peas to be eaten as beans and both he and Kira jumped at me and said "Good Lord," or as Ivan Vasilitch says "Great God," "I ate those when I was little. They were called 'mange tout' so they can't be very new." Of course Russia is "hot" on all things to do with horticulture. They are doing amazing experiments and are very successful.

I must say your day in, and out, of Leeds seems to have

been horribly energetic and Art Galleryish, but I gather you enjoyed yourself. I guess I'll be leaving you to the kind attention of a guide when you get to Moscow because I'm still "off" museums and the like. If you go to the Tretakovsky Gallery I'll come just to look at a portrait of "Ivan the Terrible," it simply fascinates, he must have been clever as hell.

About the medical books, if you think it's wiser to send them via Arcos, my doctor is, as you know, Dr Ebreure, and he is working in the X-ray, Ront-goen or whatever it is in German and Russian, Institute, Pushkinskaya Street, as Gynæcologist, but he lives in Kovskaya Street. Do as you think best, send them direct to him or to me. I think it will be better to send them to his private address because books are precious and some of the other doctors might take a fancy to them in the Institute.

Ja, Austria was in a bloody mess, but isn't it worse now? \* We are all sick at heart. When I say we, I mean Meow, Kira and the other young sparks who frequent my house. It ended so tragically. But I guess it couldn't end otherwise yet. But don't let us get political. I'm not so interested even if you are.

But I guess war, with a capital W, is just round the corner.

Talking about plants again, thank your husband for his advice about primroses and what not, but you know that when I try to think about autumn now, I can't remember that we have much frost before the snow. It seems to me that one day it's gorgeous warm autumn weather and the next, snow.

But I'll cover them up as advised. The gardener in the town nurseries gave me a rose-bush last October. He just covered it with a mound of soil for the winter, the whole of it buried deep. How would you like it if you had to bury all your rose-bushes in England for the winter? But I guess the primroses wouldn't stand for that, what? I like to hear you talk of spruce boughs, are you thinking of sending me some?

There are none in our Institute grounds and it isn't allowed to take branches from the forest.

Kira should have gone to Leningrad on the 25th but got flu so is still at home in bed. He may go on the third or fourth. He hopes to bring Garry and Marina back, meanwhile O. V. is like a cat on hot bricks wondering if he can persuade me to be friends. He's useful as a cavalier to take me to concerts and plays when Kira works all night long. I hate going to concerts alone and returning home late with a nine out of ten possibility of being robbed of hat, coat, and other articles of value. Most of the police have gone to Kiev, since the capital has been transferred back again there from here. Hence the outbreak of thieving. So once more Kira does not like me to go out alone. Yesterday in the Market in Lermontovskaya I was walking along with a bottle of oil in my basket when a young lad put his hand on the neck of the bottle to pull it out. I knocked his hand hard and he was off in a flash. But Kira was horrified. He said the lad might have out with his knife and slashed my hand off. You can't see me being meekly robbed, can you? But more police are being trained, so you needn't worry.

Write me soon. I'm off for a mud bath.

EDDIE.

\* [This reference to Austria shows that the people in Russia were now kept well informed as to the general situation in Europe. On the 12th of February, a fortnight before this letter was written, Dollfuss, virtual dictator of Austria, dealt with the Communist threat of a general strike, by proclaiming martial law in Austria. The massacre of the working-class people in Vienna began. Men, women, and children were mown down by machine-guns. The casualties were heavy. No wonder the Russians were sick at heart.

Other events, well publicised in Russia, were leading to increased ill-feeling between Russia and Germany. The day

after this letter was written, Dmitroff, of the Reichstag Trial, was sent back by aeroplane to Moscow. He said that if he ever returned it would be to a German Soviet Republic. Feeling ran high. In September of this year, U.S.S.R. joined the League of Nations. In November an agreement settling the Lena Goldfields dispute, referred to in Letter 29, was signed between representatives of Great Britain and U.S.S.R. in Moscow. In every way, Russia was trying to line up the nations of Europe against Germany.]

## 93

KHARKOV

*10th March 1934*

Dearest Bambino,

Thanks for the letter and the newspaper articles which you enclosed. Bah! If people come to Russia firmly intending to criticise, then criticise they will, especially when the papers they write for WANT it. The world's a mess, and I guess it's politicians who get us there, especially when they bother about the price of potatoes as sold to them when they visit Russia. Apart from medicaments, things are jolly cheap in Russia now, so who cares about newspaper articles. Why not just believe me? I do live here, while your newspaper correspondents come for a week or a month. It makes me angry.\*

Nice impression you must have of me. Sorry you hadn't "jumped" to it that Ivan Vasilitch Obreimov is only one person. Mother has a photograph of him, if ever you should be home and are interested enough to see. There's one photo with Kapitza and Kira and Johnny Gamov and Ivan Vasilitch, the latter is nearly sure to be smoking a pipe. I think he's on the left-hand side, anyhow he's not old, unless you count forty old. He's been in Moscow lately. Dr Ebreure is now

learning English from me, he comes 1 P.M. and goes a short time before 5 P.M. The hours these Russians will work! Just like Kira, drive at it. I'm not bored really, only it seems a colossal piece out of the day somehow. I'm not sure that I'll be glad to keep such an effort up. I wouldn't mind being a nurse really, only the thought of having to go and help at harvest time and also during potato-picking is a bit too much for me, but I guess if there's a war I'll be glad to do that too.

The verdict on myself is that my mud baths must last two months, not the mud but the treatment. After that I'll be X-rayed again, and if there's no result I shall go to Yeopatopia on the Black Sea for further mud baths, and if that fails I guess I'll give it up.

Oh gee, I wish I could see even the most second-rate English film here. There's simply no pleasure going to the Kino, so we rarely do so. Every film here's the same, perhaps I'm mad, but you know, just for a change, I'd sell my soul to see Ronald Colman or some other sob-stuff.

My maid, Sonia, tells me *The Sheik* came last week, but it must be ages old and hardly visible, so I didn't waste my shekels. But a modern European film never comes. So please appreciate what films you do see in England. Your husband may stay in Russia if he ever comes. This country's attractive enough and such a future, and in agriculture particularly. You might all be amazed if you saw the progress and possibilities. So if John settles here you'll have to put up with our films and be less critical.

Your drawing-room sounds delightful, and for heaven's sake leave it emptyish, it's much nicer.

Yes, I am intending to rub the fireplace down, but I want to have the cavities between the bricks filled in first, and I'm going to colour-wash it yellow first so that when rubbed down it will give a softer colour, but we're leaving all that until spring. I fully appreciate my luck, it "draws well." And I am lucky too in my kitchen range, it's an ugly thing, and



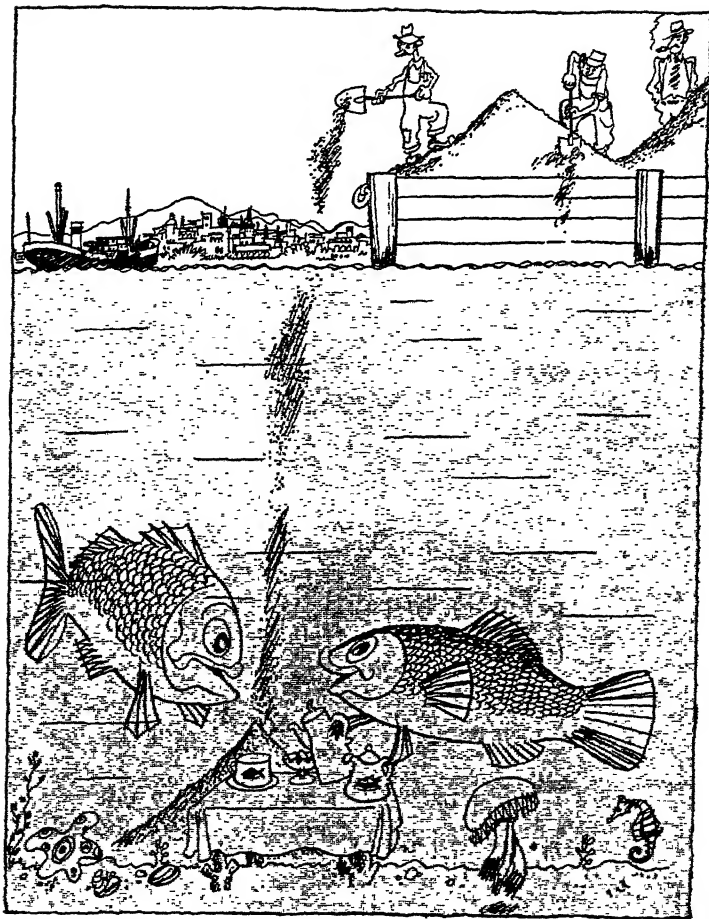
awfully badly made, but it does work, three years now and not a repair, but I guess this summer will see a leak in the tank, the water is hopelessly hard, kettles and everything simply go to pot, not meant to be funny.

I would like some paint, just the right colours already mixed and no fuss and I expect no fading. Oh, you lucky devil you can get it. I guess we've both inherited Mother's "handyness" only I need it more than you, because Kira rarely does anything in the house, he says to-morrow he will help me re-do a divan that we want to transport to the living-room in order to get some "modern" shelves fixed at one end, my design to include radio as well. But I guess that won't be yet awhile, since we're broke after spending such a lot on material for curtains and a blazer, which I made for Kira, and other sundry things around the house. I saw some black American cloth with a bright yellow backing, in the "Universal Shop" the other day, so bought four yards and made some bathroom curtains, so we are quite "ultra" even in Kharkov.

Kira taught me how to fix fuses and plugs and switches and all the odds and ends connected with electricity, but I'm not keen on it and generally leave it to him.

Thanks about the books, we got both omnibus thrillers, and I have written about them so the letter must be lost, because I remember asking didn't you think that the "omnibus thriller" was written by one man and not by three as stated. Dorothy Sayers' was awfully good and greatly appreciated by the scientific world here.

Thanks awfully for the seed catalogue, I guess after paying for the seeds and postage, and for vegetables, I will owe you a lot of money. Did you send parsley and cucumber? stockwood ridge? and will you inquire about sending grass seed? I don't think I can ever have a nice lawn because all the grass will be burnt up by the end of June, so ask John



A HARBOUR IN BRAZIL. COFFEE IS BEING DUMPED INTO THE SEA. "WILL YOU HAVE BLACK COFFEE OR WAIT UNTIL THEY GIVE US MILK?"

what he advises. I shall water it most religiously every evening like the flower-beds, but you never saw decent grass yet on the Continent, did you? Anyhow I don't know how much I shall want.

Sasha Lipunsky, pronounced Lipoonsky, is going to Cambridge for six months or so, and Sinelnikov is going to Manchester, you can't think of anybody who'd like to meet a Russian straight from oven so to speak? Because I think Efim Markovitch Sinelnikov, engineer, is going to be lonely and Manchester seems to me the last place to go if he doesn't know much English. He's going to be in Metro-Vickers I think for half a year.

Write soon and please order the seeds and I shall begin planting on April 1st.

Love, BUNNY.

PS. Do your local inhabitants *still* think capitalist ways are best?—or don't they mind so long as the food destroyed is not destroyed in England and is not the food that they have grown?—coffee, cocoa, wheat, oranges. Russia tries to increase food and distribute it, capitalists put it into the sea when they can't get a good price, and poor people go without for that reason.

This is a Russian cartoon. I've translated it for you. Good, what? One fish is saying to the other as she holds the coffee-pot in her fin, "Will you have black coffee or wait until they give us milk?"

\* [By March, 1934, the second Five-Year Plan had so justified itself in Russia that Eddie was angry that foreign newspaper articles should criticise it and give what she considered a false idea of living conditions in Russia.]

*25th March 1934*

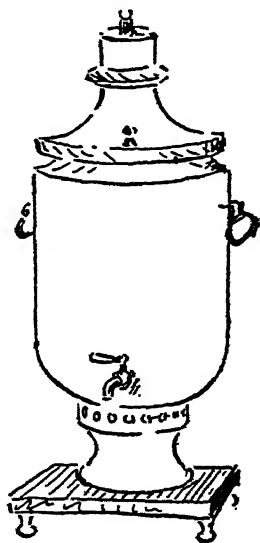
Darling,

I got your letter with the cutting, and the second lot of seeds, magnificent effort, and now I can begin gardening. The snow's gone and it's so warm; they say that below twenty centimetres the ground is still frozen but that will go soon.

Before I forget, Sasha Lipunsky is going to England, in fact I think he must be there already, and I would like you to meet him, so if you can arrange to have him for a week-end, will you? If you write him care of Kapitza I'm sure it will find him. He's going to work in Cambridge a little. Perhaps it would be better to wait a month before inviting him so that he gets used to the language, because I've been here four years and have never heard one word of English from him. I think he knows German quite well, so perhaps you could combine those anti-Nazi German refugees of Mrs Burnley's. Sasha is a Communist so don't get very political. "Meow" tells me he's one of the most intelligent men he ever met and I think "Meow" knows what he's talking about so I'm not sending anybody dull to you.

By the way I've bought you a samovar for your new house. It's brass and not new, but I think it will look quite nice if it's cleaned up a bit.

Something like this, but it weighs a ton and I guess will be the only luggage I bring home with me next time. But I think it might look nice



on some of these old chests of drawers you seem to be buying up all over the countryside.

Love, BUNNY.

PS. If you go to Italy and I happen to get a passport will you come chasing back?

PPS. If the neighbours are scandalised at you painting your own front door what sort of lives do they live? Anyhow that's one thing nobody minds in Russia, they're maybe amused, but at least one doesn't feel they're saying "Fancy Eddie doing this, that or the other." Even with my garden, though they don't really understand my desire for it, they do take an amused interest in it, while leaving me to do the dirty work! I believe were I to have a real "affaire" with another man, other than Kira, that would only amuse 'em too, and anyhow they wouldn't hurt my feelings, because morals just aren't here as morals, that is the hypocritical standard of morals in England which used to permit a man to have a mistress on the quiet, but would be scandalized at a divorce and remarriage.

I went to hear Prokofieff last night, he's simply wonderful, as wonderful as his music. He doesn't look so very much older than Kira, though he must be ten years older. His face is quite like a scientist's, I think, rather lean, with a high forehead, smooth hair, not a bit of the unkempt look. And his playing! if only you could have shared the joy of listening, listening.

Love, BUNNY.

4th April 1934

Hello, my old Cock-Sparrow,

I got your letter yesterday, but I wrote some days ago about the medical book, Kelly. I shall no doubt go about singing "Anybody here seen Kelly, Kelly from the Isle of Man."

Your description of home, strange to say, makes me envious. If, my good woman, you could see, only see, the junk in my flat you'd understand how I long to have even one piece of furniture which looks genuine, and not three-ply-wood stained, or sackcloth dyed. Useful, yes, but I'm sick of the whole shute, it's all such rubbish. The piano, which is the best piece of wood we have, was ruined in transit, and is therefore scratched, broken, water-marked and, unhappily, lavishly ornate with so many years of dust in the decorations that I can do nothing, and we never seem to collect enough money to have it re-polished. Anyhow enough of this, only if you ever hear of anyone going to work in the U.S.S.R. you write and ask them to bring me an easy-chair or two along with their own belongings. Your chairs sound charming and you seem to be an accomplished buyer, only drop the idea of me furnishing a house in England, it sounds too good to be true and in any case too far distant. After the world revolution maybe.

Don't however think I'm following Hans' example. Politics aren't my line and if they were I hope I would know how to write to friends abroad. When letters come from Germany, Kira gets quite cross, and wants to know why the hell I read 'em if they make me angry. Only after all a letter's a letter isn't it? And I haven't the will to throw it away unopened. We actually got one *Observer* to-day and I gather from it that Hans' wife, with all the rest of German women, will

thrive and produce the millions needed to reproduce the new Germany after the next war, and in fact become the true Victorian housewife, only now they call it some kind of "emancipation."

I'm glad you miss John so much when you're away, the return will be so much nicer. At present I'm stagnating. I think Kira is an anchor for me, because when he's away I just drift aimlessly, can't even read a book for more than five minutes.

Wish I had a few hundred pounds to send you, but roubles aren't much use are they? Kira seems to be really going to write his book this year so we ought to have plenty of spare cash then.

I hardly dare mention my private affairs now in case John gets excited, but Kira has been away a month in Leningrad and it has given me time to look round and consider my life. Kira is my sheet anchor. I'm lonely when he works such long hours, that is why I collect friends. I come second to his work. But I love him truly and accept the situation. He says I don't come second. As for O. V. yesterday I raked up courage from somewhere to tell him I didn't care to continue our so-called "friendship" in Kira's absence and wished only to meet him on gardening or Institute business or for friendly tea when Kira comes back. He almost wept, but I was angry and indifferent so that's settled, and as for "Daw," he's such a darling. I can't be in love with him, but he's so sweet and charming, and so unhappy, I want to weep over him. I've got an 'orrible premonition that before the year is out he'll be dead, and not naturally. I think he needs only a very little more pain to make him a suicide. He should go abroad to Denmark this month. Doesn't that remind you of Hamlet? Well he is a Hamlet. He hates having to wait to go abroad, but it is not his fault, somehow he is being held up over the passport. I think it will do him good, but I fear a return to this state of cold desperation when he's been home a month or so.

He's definitely not in love with me and so if he decides to end his life I am helpless. Does it all sound mad? but so it is.

Russian films are going to the dogs, some are so good, but the latest here is called *St Petersburg Nights* and is futile. I went twice, hoping the second time to understand a little more and so to see the point of the picture, but as far as I could make out, it's pointless. Is Hollywood any better? You would say no.

Write soon again and my love to John, tell him we're hectically gardening, planting trees, bushes, etc., but not yet seeds.

Kharkov will look lovely this summer—with gardens to the chief buildings. You will be surprised when you come.

As ever, BUNNY.

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KHARKOV 24

25th April 1934

Darling,

If I'm not sick of answering the Crossen's Kelly question! Must I once more write that the name of the medical directory is Kelly. Either this post business is getting worse and you not getting my letters, or else you don't read them. The directory would be such a help to medical and scientific friends here, and think how you will be helping to further good relations between our two countries if you send it and then medical people here begin to correspond with England about work and books. So do hurry up and send it, there's a dear.

I was glad to get your letter to-day with the sketch. Kira and I think it's probably nicer in natural colours, no slur on your sketching, but we're "off" churches, except ones with



top-knots on like onions, or better still with domes large and small like those on the Pavilion at Brighton. I mean the Palace that Nash built for George IV when he was Prince of Wales so that George should think he had gone abroad to stay when really he had only travelled sixty miles from London. The architecture is Byzantine, I think? Do you remember how surprised we were to see a church in an Austrian valley dressed up with a top-knot like that? Someone told us such churches are to be found all along the caravan route from the East. Well, Ukraine must be the East, I mean the home of churches. Kiev is full of them, lovely, lovely old architecture. As you haven't been here yet, you can't judge what this revolution is doing to life and architecture, only of course I can't really talk to you about it in a letter. I only know that, speaking as a mere speck on the earth, I can't understand the advantage of persuading all these interesting tribes and peoples, north and south, south especially, to drop the national costume in a land of sun, and to adopt the paltry machine-made clothing that's for sale as an alternative. With buildings it's perhaps different, because more windows are always nice, but the outside quaintness of the old-fashioned Russian houses is like a fairy-tale. When they go it will take a lot of character from the streets that these cold grey blocks certainly won't replace.

I'm glad you managed to come to some arrangement about your "work-making kitchen range"; our problem is water, and when the summer comes the problem is acute. You see the river dries up so, and sandy soil doesn't produce wells. And our skies don't produce English summer rain!

I don't suppose you've found Sasha Lipunsky yet, it seems he's still in London. I guess the Kapitzas were away for Easter. Be nice and kind to him, he's never been anything else to me and it was Sasha who got me my passport last time I came home.

Will they still be showing the *Henry VIII* film when I

come home in God knows how long. I read in a paper that Russia is the only country in the world that hasn't shown any interest in it, but perhaps in 1944 it'll be showing here.

Harrogate sounds hopeless. I'm not in the mood to find pleasure in sitting about looking "chic" and talking rot. That is one of the immeasurably good things which Russia has done for me.

Your EDDIE.

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KHARKOV 24

14th June 1934

Darling,

I got your London letters and a lot of books. Kira and I are very grateful and I especially so, since you say they're for my birthday. But I'm awfully pleased anyhow because I'm not feeling very well these days and lie down an awful lot. I generally begin by reading and end by sleeping but don't seem to recover. I have a lot of visitors and perhaps it is I am just weary from the strain. Petia and his sister came, uninvited, and are staying until the twenty-fifth. That'll be a month, and Petia doesn't offer to pay a penny though he earns three times as much as we do. I don't want to be mean, but if he would eat what we do without criticism I wouldn't feel so bad. He's continually grumbling. Then we have Marina, but she's a dear and never gives a moment's trouble. Soon Garry will come, so you can guess what it's like, two people sleeping in each room and a maid in the kitchen.

Petia's sister is nicer than he, but the first night she came she got a poisoned toe, so was in bed a week with me as nurse and the doctor coming very often. We were afraid once she'd have to have her leg off, but all went well and now she's knit-

ting me a jumper. But in among all this I'm feeling seedy and am nearly sure there's a baby. I've not seen my doctor yet. He says it's too early to tell, but he's coming to-morrow officially, so I'll keep this letter back to tell you the result. I may say I'm also trying to get home, but it's like knocking one's head against a stone wall. Still one can but try. I'm not going to tell Mother about the passport until I've got it, if I do. It's frightfully amusing, Kira hated the idea of my having a baby, but now he thinks I'm heading that way he's much more excited than I am.

I must say that the garden is not flourishing, the weather is so hot and dry, and tragedy of tragedies, what we thought were primroses have turned into foxgloves. The peas and beans are alright, and the parsley, but among the flowers, gypsophila wins.

I'm going to see *Boris Godenough* to-night, so in the meantime I shall sleep and finish to-morrow.

*Later. 15th June*

Well the doctor came, he says he can't be absolutely sure, but he seemed terribly excited. You see the specialist evolved a theory about cases like mine quite some time ago and the people at the clinic believed it too. But it could not be proved because the treatment is rather long and arduous and they had never got a Russian woman to stay the course. So I'm glad I did stick it, apart from the fun of having a "malinke bebe." They've been so good to me. Also all the treatment was free. Still I shan't be able to tell you definitely until the twenty-second or twenty-third. Meanwhile I go on with my mud baths.

*Boris Godenough* was simply marvellous, it began eight prompt and finished at a quarter to one. I was nearly finished too. It's beyond words for beauty of scene and music, but a little heavy and terrible tragedy. Petia, who took me, wants to get places for *The Tzar's Bride* to-morrow, but I'm not sure he'll manage it. I'd love to go, it's also in the time of Ivan the Ter-

rible. That man fascinates me somehow. The company doing these operas is Stanislavsky's, so you can imagine how real the characters and scenes were, since he holds that opera singers must be able to act too, and not just produce beautiful sounds. If ever you come to Russia you must see one of his operas produced, that is, his production of opera. You must also go to see the Leningrad opera to compare, the latter is supposed to be the best in Russia, but I'm not sure the acting is as natural, or the settings either. But I almost believe that Russian Opera is more magnificent than the Paris Opera.

Kira loved Arnold Bennett's *Buried Alive*.

Must go for dinner. Write soon.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

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KHARKOV 24

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

25th June 1934

Darling Bambino,

I forgot to ask you in my last note if you know of any literature that will be useful to me just now. There's Marie Stopes of course with *Wise Parenthood*, but perhaps your doctor friends can tell you of something else. I forget the name of the woman doctor who came to the skating rink with us, she would know what books are practical and modern. I would just like to know how to take ordinary precautions, for you know what I am, I shall probably forget after the first week or two and begin chopping wood again.

Will you try and get me a special permit for an old-fashioned smock, you know, country grandfather type, if you can get two through, do so. And that's about all I'll be troubling you for until I come home in the autumn, if I do. I didn't find any wool in the last parcel, but I expect it will come in time.

Did you get my letter about Wiersma?—and have you heard from him yet? He wants to come back to Kharkov because there is no apparatus for his kind of research in Holland. This is the only laboratory in the world that has it.

How is John?

Lots of love, BUNNY.

You know it'll be grand if I do get home in the autumn because I shall try and stay until the baby is born, and I'll be able to see more of you than if I just came for six weeks, and I'm longing to see the flowers and things, and we can go and see that lovely village and the house you took for your honeymoon, with the moors above and the stream below. I long to see heather again and lush grass.

## 99

*30th June 1934*

Darling,

What books is Mother sending, because she's already sent me a book on baby socks, how to knit them.

How is the book for Dr Jevnin (Yebnin) Ebreure? If you haven't sent it yet, better send it to me because he's changed his address. I hope you can send it soon because I think he thinks I've backed out of my promise and now I'm going to have a baby I'd like to show him I'm grateful for his treatment of me.

Will you send the enclosed letter on to Wiersma in an envelope of your own. He may come here in August, so if you can get it off immediately we shall be glad. Isn't it a roundabout correspondence? But if we send the letter direct from here I doubt whether his own post office would deliver it. Or even his family might intercept it. They do not want him to come

to Russia. He of course is extremely anxious to do so, because of his science. Russia is the only country in the world that has this low-temperature apparatus for the making of nitrates. So unless Wiersma does return he can never carry on his work. So it matters a great deal to him as you will understand.

Do you remember at school doing an essay on "The importance of nitrates"? Well Russia is short of nitrates and cannot afford to import them, so this wonderful invention was carried through, and it is the cheapest way in the world to make nitrates. They just drop out of the air.

I notice this letter is nothing but requests.

Love, BUNNY.

I O O

KHARKOV 24

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

16th July 1934

Darling Bambino,

At the moment it's ninety-five degrees in the shade and just a bit cooler than it's been all day, so imagine how I'd like that rain you had in Lakeland. We have odd showers but they don't seem to make any difference to the heat.

Yes, I expect Lakeland's changed, but it reminds me of Norman Black somehow. Did you see that he won a "Round the Houses" race in the I.O.M. not long ago? One of Kira's lab. boys had the *Motor Cycle* or some such magazine and it was in there.

What fun if you start in with a family too. When are you going to Italy and for how long? I'm beginning to be desperate about the passport, nobody seems to want to help and if I don't get home before the winter it will be awfully dif-

ficult travelling, and I shall have to cross Germany, which I certainly don't want to do with a Red passport.\*

I may go to Moscow for a day or two with Ivan Vasilitch to see if arrangements can be made to get it through quicker, but gosh I do feel it's all so hopeless, like battering one's head against a brick wall. I saw Dr Yebnin yesterday. He says I'm quite well and must go again in a fortnight but he tells me nothing about diet at all, so I train myself to drink fruit juices and eat raw apples and not too much bread and so on. I indulged in lemon juice night and morning for about three weeks, but now there aren't any lemons so I have to devise other means. I shall love to come to your village and be quiet if I get home, no relations and nobody, just us and an English garden.

The garden here is looking a bit better after a shower or two, but the main feature, the herbaceous border that was to "larn" the Institute about gardening, is a complete failure, something like this.

I enclose a sketch. The honeysuckle was bought here. But the pansies, lupins, pinks, marigolds, and mignonettes, also the flax, came from your Yorkshire seeds. And that's the lot, but you can see what colossal blanks there are.

Asters (4 or 5)	Salpiglossis (3 or 4)	Salvia (7 or 8)	Gypsophila.	Some seeds I. Vasilitch gave me.	Stocks.	Californian poppies (fine).	A few miniature sun-flowers.	1 solitary candy-tuft.	About 4 shoots (minute) of lavender and 1 unplanted tomato!!
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The long border is not so bad, with stocks, Californian poppies, and four minute sprigs of lavender! The peas were splendid and the beans look full of promise, not to mention the glorious parsley, which only Kira and I appreciate.

About the salpiglossis, Ivan Vasilitch is frightfully peeved.

I gave him half the seeds, which, on the sly, he gave to his Botanical Garden woman, none of hers have grown and some of mine have. He says it's "English seeds in English hands."

Kira I think never wants to deal with Arcos again, and I really haven't the energy. I prefer to spend it all on my passport. Anyhow, even if you don't like, will you send me, or get Mother to send me, the two smocks I asked about? One cotton and one shantung, but the smocks I want come from Lilla's and look something like this drawing. You can add an old man, a pipe and a stick, the oldest inhabitant dressed for a drink. It is really for the youngest inhabitant.

It really doesn't seem worth while to have all that bother for a bit of knitting wool does it?—and a smock, but needs must.

I shall be horrified if in the end I can't get home to twilight sleep and cleanliness, not to mention peace. Russian hospitals are hellishly noisy. They have hypnotism here instead of twilight sleep, but I'm not too certain of it.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

PS. Sasha Lipunsky seems to be getting quite famous, he's coming back to Russia for two or three weeks at Stalin's request, returning to England later. So our opinion of his brilliance is correct. He expects to come here end of September or beginning of October, if you do see him before, will you quite seriously ask him if he can help me with my passport? He got it for me last time and no one else seems interested enough. You can tell him I'm going to have a baby and want to get home before, because I shan't be able to get home for some years after, and who knows what state Europe will be in in 1937. Don't be too importunate, but do ask him, and be nice to him, he's always been so to me only I never seemed able to show him my appreciation here.

BUNNY.



\* [Ever since the Reichstag Trial the Germans had made it very unpleasant for any Russian who set foot on German territory, even in transit.]

IOI

KHARKOV

27th July 1934

Dearest,

Thanks for the card. I got the "Kelly" a day or so ago. I'm sorry to have been such a nuisance but I expect Dr Ebreure Yebnin will be very pleased. I haven't seen him yet.

Kira and I went to see the film *Chelinskin* yesterday. There's some wonderful photography and I guess it's a magnificent piece of work considering the difficulties they had. My opinion of the airmen went up, because it was absolutely obvious how awful and uneven the landing ground was. The reception in Moscow was colossal, but gave me the impression that they were out-heroing hero, or Lindberg, or whoever out-heroed the other.

Did I tell you the most beautiful red setter has attached himself to us? We are going to put a notice in the paper to say that if the owner doesn't come in three days for him we shall claim him as ours.

A young Canadian came to Kharkov. Kira invited him to lunch and he came and sat until 10.30 P.M. He says England is very Anti-German, is it true?

I got two books of Truby King's for which many thanks, it's made Kira quite sensible, and he's stopped treating me as a piece of valuable china.

Write soon, love to John and thanks for everything.

BUNNY.

[The red setter was a beautiful animal and lived with Eddie and Kira for years. At that time, finding it difficult to get the shade of material she wanted for a frock, Eddie had made herself a dress from the Paisley satin lining of a cloak. The red setter was almost the same colour as the tones of the dress, and when he walked the streets of Kharkov behind the tall, slim figure of his mistress, people used to stop and look at "the English chic."]

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KHARKOV 24  
CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
*8th August 1934*

Darling,

I was frightfully pleased to get your letter after so long a time. I did write to you about Dr Ebreure Yebnin's book, so I hope ere this you know that I received it.

You seem to lead a gay life with all your visitors. I hope Sasha Lipunsky will be able to stay with you, but perhaps he's very busy. He arrives here the 1st September, so I'm told. We shall be away so I shan't be able to ask him myself. And I also fear he will be too busy to help me. Still Obreimov is trying to do something, only it's not the same as Sasha helping, because Ivan Vasilitch isn't a Communist nor a member of the Party. I'm doing all I can, but just at the moment I feel the whole thing is hopeless, still there's always one consolation that if I can't get, you can come.

The idea of you coming to meet me at the German border in the event of my getting a passport is so thrilling. I shall collapse with disappointment if I don't succeed. It really would be fun to travel with you again, and we could see Anne-Maria in Berlin, if she's there, and Mrs Werniker.

Kira and I went to see *Chelinskin* but I think I told you about it. It sounds better than Garbo, but I'm just dying for a bit of sob-stuff. I'll get Edwina to go with me, she won't mind so much, but I don't like John Gilbert, so I hope the beautiful Ronald Colman has produced something since *Martin Arrowsmith*.

I quite naturally seem to drink lots more water, the only snag is, one runs a risk drinking unboiled water, and boiled water is so flat and a fag to keep cool. I'd like some barley water so guess I'll have to look it up in Mrs Beeton unless I can find your last letter.

Kira's writing his book, all day and all night as far as I can judge, for when I wake up at 3 or 4 A.M. he's never in bed, but I'm sure he sends his love just the same, he's an awful dear these days.

BUNNY.

PS. I'm getting awfully tired of climbing up three flights of stairs for treatment each morning when I'm feeling sick. Each day I swear to stop it and each day I say to myself sternly "Do you want this baby?" Then I set out as usual. The doctor says no Russian patient has seen his treatment through yet. We'll see if I do.

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KHARKOV

30th August 1934

Darling Bambino,

If I get my English visa I shall be home before the end of September, and shall definitely sail from Leningrad to London. It's easier, and as it is stated on my passport that I am not allowed to take any "valuta" out with me, it'll be

more convenient than going through Berlin, and anyhow after your Italian trip I expect you're broke so that's that. If you are back from Italy before I arrive you'll just come and meet me in London—or will you wait for me to get to your village?

Amid all the excitement, and on the other hand the misery of leaving Kira, I'm not in a letter-writing mood, so it'll just about equal your last for brevity.

Love to both, BUNNY.

Why should parting be such hell when I want to come and see you?

## 104

KHARKOV

*1st September 1934*

Hello,

Don't think this scrap of paper is economy, it's all I can find without trouble. I don't know whether you're in Italy or in England, but I have one request, go to Woolworths and buy me a cheap wedding ring, if you can find one with straight sides like mine had, probably Mother won't notice it's not the same.

I sold mine in Torgsin once when Kira and I were hungry and penniless, so I don't regret it, but England is so moral and Mother would be upset anyhow.

Meet me at the boat with it and give it me when Mother isn't looking.

Love, BUNNY.

[When Eddie returned to Russia in May 1932, she found the country was suffering from a terrible drought. It was one

of the worst in history, and following on the very dry season of 1931 the result was disastrous. The grain crop was insufficient for the nation's needs, let alone for export. There was therefore a repetition of the money shortage and great difficulty in getting breadstuffs. Eddie's letters about this were, as stated earlier, lost when her sister moved house. The ring was sold in the winter of 1932. That winter the Soviet decided that Russia was not yet drawing to the full on her food resources and there was a great drive towards the increased use of tractors. The harvest of 1933 yielded satisfactory results and the kind season helped in this. But the Russians decided to guard against drought in future. In 1936, in spite of lack of rain, they harvested good food crops, due to specialised seed, irrigation, manuring, etc. They even grew corn in Siberia, a climate till then regarded as impossible of any food production.]

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KHARKOV 24

CANKOBCHAIR 16

*18th September 1934*

Dear Old Bean,

I got your postcard from Italy and I suppose you got my letters about change of route and buying a cheap ring. Well this is as final as I can make it and I shall write further directions. I am forbidden by the doctor to go by Leningrad-London sea route, so I am having or trying to have the place of departure from Russia changed to Shepatovka. It's not absolutely definite yet but almost so. Hence I think it will be wise if you can prepare yourself for the trip to Warsaw, even to getting the visa, because I expect you'll need more than a transit visa. Then when I am absolutely certain which way I shall travel I will wire. If I don't go via Poland I can

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refund you the money for unused visas, etc., and if so, well, we'll call the debt cancelled. I had hoped that if I went through Poland that I could have gone with some friends but they're leaving on the twenty-sixth and as the British Consulate works so damn slowly, really worse than Russian offices, I fail to see how I can get things through in time, and so will be travelling about a week later than they, and alone. I'm so jolly mad about the way the English visa is going, because I started agitating for it before I actually got, or even knew, I should get a passport, so all the stodgy bit was done and here they go keeping my letters eight days before answering, and to-day when I expected at least a notification that they would grant a visa, they thank me for my letter and state that I shall be notified about a visa in due course. Pah, do they think having a passport I can stay indefinitely in Russia before going abroad? I expect it will go alright now, but Christ, they are slow.

Kapitza came to stay with us last week, and Sasha Lipunsky. I shall certainly land Lipunsky on you for a week-end. What about the New Year? He's simply charming since his return from England. Really so good to me. It isn't that he wins me by talking English. He refuses to speak a word of English to me. So I don't know how he speaks it at all. But evidently enough to do all that he wants to do.

Kapitza seems very changed. Not a bit like the Kapitza of our Cambridge days, nor the man who taught me one naughty word of Russian a day when first I came here. Perhaps it is because the Government has given him such tremendous responsibility.\*

If you still want to meet Hans in Germany, arrange to do so before I arrive, then you can all be at the station. There's about an hour to wait, I think. I guess I shall be able to say all I want in that time. Really I cannot stand these native Germans with their Nazi ideas any more.

And one more thing, if you come, will you ask Wiersma

to meet you on the outward journey, in order to arrange for him to meet you on the way back. He will be able to meet you at The Hook or Rotterdam. The fact is, I'm travelling in a fur coat he bought for his wife and which they wouldn't allow through, so I want to see him, but all correspondence of his is now closely examined in Holland, they suspect him as a Communist, so only say you are going through Holland and wish to see him, and when you see him, tell him you'll wire from Warsaw or Berlin, better the latter, what time the train gets to Rotterdam and he will meet the train and take the coat. Don't mention Russia or Kharkov. If you want you can say you are meeting "Eddie" and when you see him explain about the coat.

If you come bring that cheap wedding ring with you.

Lots of love, BUNNY.

\* [The truth was that Professor Kapitza had visited Russia as usual that summer and had been told by the Soviet Government that he would not be allowed to return to Cambridge University. They had other plans for him. Kapitza had worked for many years at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge and the University thought so highly of him that they gave him a professorship. Eddie mentions it with delight in October 1930 after Kapitza had returned to Cambridge. He came to Russia each year during the vacation to act in a consultative capacity to the Soviet Government. Now the Soviet felt strong enough to disregard any foreign expression of opinion regarding their treatment of their most famous nationals. Russia had need of the world-famous Kapitza. He was to be their chief administrative scientist as well as carrying on his own particular line of research. The Soviet Government therefore came to an arrangement with Cambridge University and bought all Kapitza's apparatus from the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge. The University had supplied it to Kapitza according to his own designs in the

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first place. This machinery was shipped to Leningrad and erected in the laboratories there. The Soviet gave Kapitza a magnificent house of his own in Leningrad and also proceeded to build him a beautiful summer home as well. Kapitza took over the work that the older man, Professor Yoffey, had done before him and also arranged for its extension. Both science and industry were to expand farther east in the Soviet Union.]

[Eddie's sister went to Warsaw to meet her. That way, Eddie would not cross German territory alone.

Tired after an all-night journey from Danzig, Eddie's sister arrived in Warsaw on a cold October morning. She found the city as cold and grey as any English northern port in midwinter. Perhaps her travelling companions had not improved her outlook. She had slept in a lower berth, three greasy males occupied the rest. They began to get up and put on shoes, collars, and coats long before they were due in Warsaw. Eddie's sister lay quietly waiting. At last a dark-haired Pole got alarmed at her apparent lack of readiness and insisted she get up too. He indicated "Varshava" was almost in sight, and unless she stood waiting in the corridor the train would carry her on. She stood in the corridor for a long swaying half-hour.

Going out of the station Warsaw looked desolate. All the near-by buildings seemed half-finished or half-demolished. They may have been rebuilding, but there appeared to be acres of derelict land just round the station. Fortunately there was one modern hotel built of white stone just across the square from the station. A porter carried her bags there and argued about his tip. The receptionist was a very dapper young man, who allotted her a room without any show of enthusiasm. She retired to bed till nine A.M., when the breakfast she had ordered was brought to her room by the same young man.



She dressed and went out. It was cold. A cutting wind from the Vistula blustered beneath a lead-grey sky. Eddie's sister bought a map and then asked a policeman, in German, the way to the Winter Palace. He understood, but could not reply in German so he pointed to a tram. She walked along stone-setted streets to the stopping-place. Horses clattered by, pulling high Russian carts with great hoops over them. There were a few cars.

Eddie's sister never lacked courage. She knew no Polish, but she mounted the tram and pointed vigorously to her map. The conductor could not understand, but a Polish soldier sitting next to her got her ticket and told her where to get off.

The central park of Warsaw enchanted her. It was all gold and orange under the autumn leaves and a red squirrel dashed across her feet. The Winter Palace was small and elegant, a jewel of baroque architecture. Eddie's sister still recalls her feeling of absolute satisfaction as she walked through those perfect oval rooms and studied their rococo decoration. It seems certain that the Germans have since thoroughly wrecked that Polish palace.

Eddie's sister lunched at her hotel and found the dining-room very spacious and silent. The hangings were of gold tapestry and the furniture and decorations were of gilt. The only guests were German and Japanese. She wondered what they were doing in Warsaw.

After lunch Eddie's sister determined to find the centre of Warsaw. But as the Germans and Japanese remained together she would not approach the Germans to ask the way. She lost herself among a maze of narrow, crowded streets and never found the heart of the city. But at last she walked down a wide and charming street where a cream-coloured palace faced a rich-looking baroque church. She went in to escape from the cruel wind. The church inside blazed with light and colour, candles shone by the hundred, and myriads

of people moved to and from the altars. The atmosphere was warm, friendly, and exciting. But there was nowhere to sit and she could not stand for ever, even to avoid the cold wind.

She left the church with regret. The next moment she had found a cinema, and the bills outside announced the film *It Happened One Night*. She went in. The talkie spoke the English dialogue. The Poles had to be content with superimposed captions in their own language.

Time passed pleasantly in the cinema while outside the bitter wind blew. But it had to be faced, for she dared not miss Eddie's train in the morning, and she had to arrange for a courier to take her there, for she would never find the platform without help, as she spoke not a word of Polish. At last she found the travel bureau and a man who could at least speak German. He appeared from behind a tall desk. He understood how important it was to find Eddie and not let her travel alone through Germany on a Red passport. The Germans hated the Russians, he said, and it was worse since Hitler. An English-speaking courier should call at the hotel at seven-thirty in the morning.

Next morning the courier appeared, a small obsequious young man who spoke perfect American. He said there was no need to go yet to meet the train from Russia. It was sure to be two hours late. Exactly on time the train slid into the station. Eddie's sister saw a fetching green cap with a long feather. Her journey across Europe was rewarded.

There were no tears this time. They took their meeting for granted. They kissed and walked into the Berlin Express just opposite. Then they chatted as if it were London and not Warsaw, and laughed as Eddie put on her new wedding ring.

Kira had smashed the atom.

Eddie had not written one word about it because she wanted to tell the great news herself. She had brought a bundle of magazines and newspapers from Russia to prove it. But at the Polish frontier they had been taken from her, and put in

a van that was immediately locked and sealed. It would not be opened again until the train crossed the Polish frontier and entered Germany. The Poles were afraid of Soviet propaganda and took no chances on the question of communist literature being seen in their country. So Eddie had to content herself meanwhile with describing her journey from Kharkov to Kiev (Keeve, she called it), Kiev to Lublin and Lublin to Warsaw. She had had time to wander round Kiev and raved about it. Its old buildings, many of them Byzantine in style, its wonderful new streets and offices built by the Soviet. She quite understood now why the city was regarded as a jewel of the Ukraine and why they had restored it to its former position of capital of the Ukraine. While she was in Kharkov and had never seen Kiev, she had felt annoyed when Kharkov had been dispossessed of its brief dignity. She was annoyed no longer.

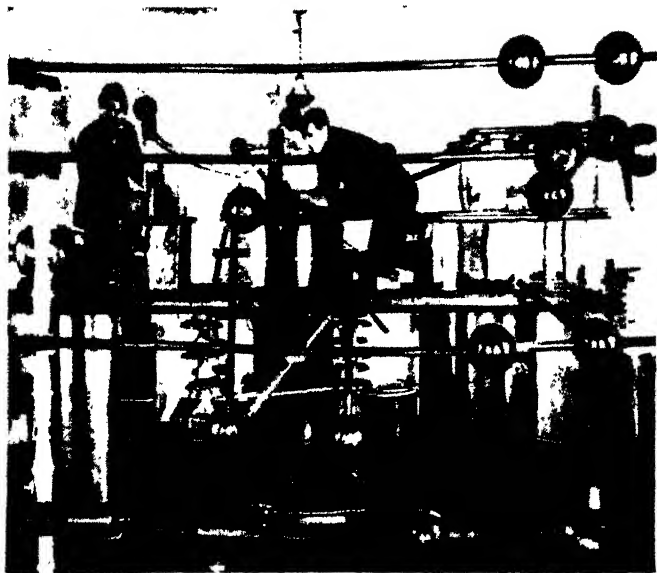
The train went on to the frontier. There the Polish car was unsealed and Eddie's papers restored to her. She hid them under the cushions and quickly sat down as the German customs officials entered the train. But Eddie had practically no luggage to declare. She had no "valuta." The Germans had not yet reached the stage when they searched the carriage. So they did not see her Russian papers. This time, too, she had not tried to bring her violin, as the time before Soviet officials had taken it from her at the frontier, and though it had been, as they promised, safely delivered back to her flat in Kharkov she had not wished to risk the violin a second time. So the customs were quickly over and the German officials grunted their way out of the carriage.

As soon as they had gone, Eddie jumped up and pulled out scientific papers and journals of all kinds, in Russian, German, English: *Pravda*, *Red Star*, local papers from Kharkov and Leningrad, even the Institute Wall Newspaper. All of them told the story of this epoch-making achievement in the history of Soviet science. Eddie was still half astonished

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Professor Leipunsky who, together with Professor "Kira," repeated the remarkable experiments of the British physicists Cockroft and Walton, and disintegrated the atom of lithium.



A 1.4 million volt d. c. generator built for the purpose of disintegrating the atomic nucleus. Professor "Kira" and Professor Walter devised a scheme by means of which it was possible to increase to almost any degree the direct voltage tensions for the bombardment of the atomic nucleus.

at finding herself to be the wife of so famous a man. She hid her pride well, but she was excited about it all still. It seemed that Ania Kapitzka had been there to share the great week and was in the flat one afternoon when the press photographers had burst in and taken Kira's photograph, taken Kira and Eddie together, taken Eddie and Ania, taken Kira, Eddie, and Ania all together. The photographers had already that morning been to the laboratory in the Institute and photographed Kira and Boris, had photographed Kira and Boris climbing about their machinery, standing near the generator, sitting at their desks. The most beautifully illustrated magazine of all, larger than the *Illustrated London News*, and with a very modern and beautiful style of production, *U.S.S.R. in Construction*, devoted pages to the Physico-Technical Institute. One paragraph from their article reads as follows:

"In the solution of the problem of the atomic nucleus (the infinitesimal particle of matter) the Soviet Union is holding one of the first places in the world.

"Well known are the works of G. A. Gamov, author of the theory of the disintegration of the atomic nucleus; of D. V. Skobeltsin on cosmic rays; of Professor Melnikov [pseudonym for Kira] and Professor A. K. Walter, who have devised a scheme by means of which it is possible with comparatively little difficulty to increase to almost any degree the direct-voltage tensions for the bombardment of the atomic nucleus; . . . of A. I. Lipunsky, of the Ukrainian Physico-Technical Institute, who together with Melnikov repeated the remarkable experiments of the British physicists Cockroft and Walton and disintegrated the atom of lithium."

So there it was. Pages of photographs, and Eddie's sister saw, for the first time, faces she had learned to imagine from the letters. Russia was suddenly, startlingly, alive, vital, forceful, scientific, earnest, constructive, strong. Nothing inefficient in pages like these, nothing to patronise in figures like these,

in face of achievements that Europe could not equal in the past decade of disillusion and unemployment. Useless almost to show these things in Europe, the few who believed already, knew already. The rest would not believe. Though they would readily believe in Eddie's stories of cold and hunger, they would not grasp the reasons for the sacrifice and struggle, would not see the great ideals behind it all.

Eddie pointed proudly to a paragraph in one paper: "Prior to the Revolution problems of physics engaged the attention of isolated individuals and their theoretical work had no contact with practice. To-day physicists work in splendidly equipped scientific institutions, solving the most important scientific problems and applying the results of their theoretical work to the practical tasks of industry. . . . Research institutes are becoming true assistants to the factories. They help our plants to master modern technics. They enrich industry by the latest achievements of science and in their turn draw from industry a wealth of material for new theoretical research."

The last page of all declared that "under the second Five-Year Plan, at the end of 1937, there should be two hundred and twenty-six engineers and technicians per ten thousand workers, which will place us at the head of all the other countries in the world."

"Why! it is a scientists' paradise," said Eddie's sister, "they reap the rewards reserved for rich industrialists and big stock-brokers in other countries." "Quite right, too," said Eddie.

As the train drew in to Berlin they put the papers and magazines into a suitcase and locked it. There might still be danger were they discovered in the hotel. For the chief magazine had as its leading article "Scientists victimised by the Fascist Régime in Germany." It gave in heavy capitals a list of two hundred and fifty-six scientists, with the subjects they studied, the names of places where they lived and worked, and from whence they had been expelled. It was

followed by an article comparing the Nazis with the vandals of the old Inquisition.

But as Eddie was obviously not a Russian, and as she need not show her passport again once she had reached Berlin, she and her sister had a very pleasant stay before they started on the last stage of their journey home to England. For in those days the Germans were concentrating on the "Bolshevist menace," the power of their hate was being occupied, and they were still, on the surface at least, friendly to England.

Christmas was wonderful. Eddie's home was situated by itself on a hill-side, some way above the village, and it commanded an uninterrupted view of the Cheshire plain. After the boundless plain east of Kharkov, it was treed, limited, and restful. When the night fell slowly, and the tapestry curtains shut out the rain, there was deep comfort in every room, and warmth and beauty. But Eddie would not admit to everything now she was safely home. She teased them. The electric light, coming by an overhead cable up the hill-side to the house, still gave trouble in a storm of wind or rain. "No better than Russia," Eddie said. It infuriated them. "Well anyway, you'll admit Russians are just as nice as English people," she said, and produced Sasha Lipunsky for the Christmas holidays. Before he went, her family fully admitted the truth of her statement. The Russian Communist, scientific advisor to Stalin, had charmed them all and their hearts were his. "A very nice young man, that foreigner," they said at the post office. "So polite." "I'll see he gets a nice taste of home-killed," said the butcher, and sent up a prime sirloin. "He'll never get better than that in Russia." And Sasha walked down the hill especially to tell the butcher how good was his English meat. "I did not think the English would be so friendly," said Sasha. "I thought they would be cold and insular." "All depends how you treat us," said Eddie's father.



Three months later Eddie's child was born in a nursing home in Liverpool. She was called "Jill" because her parents had agreed the baby was to have an English name that Russians could pronounce. The J of Jill is a sound familiar to the Russian language, and the name itself reminiscent of English nursery rhymes, of Shakespeare's songs, of old-fashioned flowers in an English cottage garden. England and Russia are blended in Jill.

The uninformed and conventional-minded amongst her English friends were horrified to think of Eddie's baby going to far-away Russia, there to be brought up, how? They pitied Eddie, and still more the child.

Eddie laughed at them. The child to be pitied was her sister's child, to be born in June, in England, and to be brought up in strictest English fashion, nanny and all. Anything might happen to the English child, or nothing; no chances opened freely to it, unless, truly remarkable from birth, the child forced a way through the stiff set avenues of English life. And after a life of long, hard work in England, nothing at the end, nothing. No security, no comfort save what he had painfully saved himself. But a Russian child, everything could happen to a Russian child. From the crèche to kindergarten, from school to institute and academy, the Russian child progressed on roses. Chances, chances everywhere. Free education, free choice of career, an undeveloped country crying out for men and women both to work and plan and develop it. The biggest country in the world, with the biggest range of climate, from the Arctic Circle, where the Soviet risked and rescued its most trusted scientists on the *Chelyuskin*, to the hot borders of Afghanistan, where industry and agriculture would soon make loyal Soviet citizens out of warring tribesmen.

So Eddie talked, and waited for the ice to leave the Gulf of Finland and free the port of Leningrad. She could not take a baby on that long train journey. But to go by boat

from the port of London to the port of Leningrad, as she had gone with Kira, would be perfect.

Meanwhile there was English comfort, English shops stuffed to overflowing with every luxury, every trinket, every necessity, every aid to cleanliness or beauty. Eddie stocked her trunks with clothes and shoes, mostly with the new crepe-rubber soles that would defy the roads of Russia for many years to come.

In her letters she had so often longed for Western sob-stuff films, in comfortable English cinemas, that her friends invited her as often as she would go. But quite soon she tired of going. The films disgusted her, talkies that talked nothing, sound for sound's sake, everything that money could buy and nothing in a film that money could not buy. It occurred to her that the wheels she had laughed at had still more purpose than the films of Hollywood. She praised *One Night of Love* and the lovely voice of Grace Moore, and condemned the other films she saw. The English theatre fared no better. The plays were staged without originality or imagination and there was a lamentable paucity of wit and purpose. Except for the clothes it might still be good Victoria's reign. Eddie was homesick for Russia and Kira.

She amused herself in the kitchen, teaching her sister's cook to make the famous Russian borsch. It took all day, and began with stewing steak, proceeded by way of every known vegetable including pickled cabbage, turned red with beetroot, and paled back again to a mere pink with the final addition of sour cream, good fresh English cream, bought specially the day before "to treat like this," cook said. The family valiantly declared they much enjoyed the act of eating borsch, but could not spare her to the kitchen for another livelong day. Eddie twinkled back and said that it was just like eating olives, the first one was simply awful, but the fourth became a necessity and a craving.

The first ship that sailed from London in May, 1935, had

Jill and Eddie on it. This time Eddie's sister could not see her off. Their father travelled to London and back the same day. He felt the responsibility of both being, and waiting to be, a grandfather. For Eddie's sister expected her own baby in June.]

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 24

29th June 1935

My love and congratulations.—KIRA.

My Darlings,

We have just got your telegram. How lovely that all your fears and worries are over. Is he to be Tony or absolutely Anthony at all times? Now you can have the satisfaction of eternally teasing me about *Anthony Adverse*. Don't forget when that book is cheap to send it to me as a memento, plus inscription. If you were expecting Anthony on the fifteenth you had a long time to wait hadn't you? I am glad Lucie was with you but Anthony was adverse.

Kira and I are very glad that Jill has a cousin her own age.

Pasha, Sonia's sister, is at present walking in our garden with Jill in her arms because it looks like rain and it's such a fag to take the pram down if it's only for five minutes. Pasha makes a good nursemaid, only I have to watch she doesn't spoil Jill. All Russians spoil their babies to my way of thinking, while they of course think I'm strict to a point of cruelty.

The Institute began building us another balcony on the north side of the house to-day. It will be marvellous to be

able to sit out all day. You can never do that on the sunny side of the block once the hot weather begins. The babe will love it because she will be able to see a tree. Now, we are still using Ivan Vasilitch's garden, it has shadier places than my two-year-old garden, and baby Jill loves to see the leaves waving about.

Oh, Bambino, when Anthony is five months old, he will be such fun. At the moment he will be just a sweet "kroshka"—"crumb"—as Kira calls Jill, but later when he begins to roll about, and to laugh when he sees you peeping over the cot, and gurgling, it really is amusing, but gosh, when Jill rattles her toys, hanging on a string, in the early morning, I do want to sleep sometimes. If I don't give her them, she crows so loudly and kicks the wicker cot so much that the effect is the same. She is much calmer now than when we first arrived from England, but it was a long journey, London to Kharkov, for a two-month-old babe. She stood it well and I shall never forget Kira's face as he first looked at her. He gazed and gazed as if he'd never see anything else as long as he lived. Then he suddenly kissed me and suddenly was as thrilled, half laughing, half crying, as the night he came home to me when he'd smashed the atom. But he won't smash this atom. At first he'd hardly touch her, was John like that with Anthony?

I try to keep very calm these days, as the Nursing Home advised. But it is hard in this difficult climate which breeds so many wretched little insects, cockroaches, bugs, and flies. They just blow in with the dust storms from the steppes. And such trouble in the Institute for Kira, incidentally Kira has got another attack of inflammation of his nerve ends, round one side, it's awful-looking and terribly painful, so he's at home. But the Institute is full of intrigues, firstly it was the Scientists against the Administrative department, but now it seems to me wheels within wheels and some of the scientists are using dirty methods to obtain their own ends, and

are naturally cross when other people, Kira included, won't sign silly letters that they want to send to Moscow.

I expect Anthony is inundated with wee coats and socks, etc. etc. Well, here's hoping our Russian gifts reach him. They'll be different.

Teach him to know the name Jill even if he never sees her. God, what a thought, but the whole world's in such a mess it's quite possible, ain't it?

Love from us all, be lazy for a long time and get strong soon. I've nearly got my figure back only it's too hot to wear tight things now.

Our love to you all. When you get to the photographic stage, don't forget that I am interested.

As ever, BUNNY.

*2nd July*

As Kira's study is barricaded for the building of the balcony I couldn't get at the envelopes and always forgot to buy. How are you to-day?

Love, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 24

*3rd August 1935*

My Darlings,

I'm sorry not to answer your long and interesting epistles more promptly, but gee the days aren't long enough to do all there is to do, and yet too long for my legs and feet, which sometimes feel they won't hold me another second, hence letter-writing goes to the wall. Not because I write with

my feet. But because when I get to that stage, I just flop on the nearest bed and almost invariably sleep.

We are still crazy about the cockroaches and after each attack on them I am so tired and disappointed I just weep. The damn things don't seem to get any less, added to which I recently found three bugs. Gosh, how I hate this place sometimes all for a few insects. Isn't it queer how one small thing can affect the whole outlook? Like a grain of sand in the eye. Because, of course, I still feel and always shall feel as I felt in England when I longed so to get back home to Kira, I couldn't live anywhere but Russia again, the life, the freedom of thought, and the chance to achieve great things open to everyone. I'd never bring my children up in England, where everything seems overcrowded and so few get chances and the young are so hedged in by the old and by convention. No, this is the country, every fibre of me loves it, and then I turn the light on in the kitchen at night to find every wall, table, etc. etc. simply covered with cockroaches and it just makes me sick. I suppose Sonia's a fairly good maid but I can't imagine why I thought she was such a marvel. I wish she didn't have to live in.

I am often thinking of you and John and Anthony, in fact if John only knew it I think of him about six times a day. Opposite the Institute entrance there have been sown and set various plants and flowers, including a long border of petunias. These are a magnificent sight and everybody is saying how wonderful they are. They are, I may say, from John's seeds which you sent. I gave the Director of the Botanical Gardens some seeds last year. She saved them and collected the seeds and this year she brought all these particular seedlings and planted them here in the Institute so that the strain won't be mixed. Kira and I keep meaning to take a photograph but never seem to have time. They border the tennis courts, so next year, when I play tennis again, it will be like playing in England, the flowers are so near.

Do you remember a balcony in Berlin, not far from the Botanical Gardens, a yellow house, blue sky, and hectic, hectic petunias? I do. Well, John's petunias always bring that balcony back to my mind. They're a wonderful advertisement anyhow and I never fail to tell people where the seeds came from, when they admire the flowers. Not that it'll help John much but one never knows. We ought to set up an Anglo-Russian exchange, each country could help the other so much I feel.

How's the wee Anthony? I hope the bottle-feeding suits him better than the struggle with you. Before I had Jill Dr Ebreure Yebnin was always telling me that I must feed her myself for the baby's sake, but he also said to feed a baby was one of the joys a man could never know. There must be something the matter with me, except that I know it's better for Jill, I don't really care two hoots whether I feed her or she feeds from a bottle. Once or twice when I've been feeling desperate from some other cause and had to feed her, I've been rather glad, but merely because I felt some other creature was absolutely dependent on me at that minute. I expect, my dear, you will adore your wee Anthony whether you feed him or not and thank heaven you have the possibility of making everything absolutely sterile. Here one always hopes there's water and gas at the same time. But it is August and the river dried up to a trickle nearly, no possibility of wells.

We had a terrible storm two nights ago and one of the factories had a fire as a result. Kira went yesterday to see whether the fire was due to lightning or negligence. They kept him there from 4 P.M. to 1 A.M. He refused to go to-day but the damned Ivan Vasilitch came and said he must go, so he's away again, just wait till I see Ivan Vasilitch alone, I'll tell him where to get off. It's so futile, because Kira ascertained the cause yesterday and wrote a paper about it, why the hell he has to become a policeman and listen to a lot of

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lying witnesses God knows. Lord, if anything goes wrong here it's always anti-revolutionaries and never from natural causes.

I envy you your lovely baths when you want them. It's the hardest work out now to make Sonia heat the water, she says it makes the kitchen too hot, so it does, but we must bathe sometimes.

Don't know why I wasn't plonked into a bath at the Westminster Nursing Home when Jill was born, but I did go through the shaking business, and I think I was more frightened in that five minutes than before or after, it seemed so beastly not to be able to stop shivering. I got so cross and then when I recovered it wasn't so bad. I mean I suppose it might have been worse.

How's John as a father? I can't help laughing at Kira, he says we must always keep two celebrations, the year and the half-year, it's a good excuse for giving her things. She's already got umpteen rubber things to chew and rattle and squeak and a wee celluloid fish. I bought two rubber fish—but they're too rubbery for her yet—that are rather nicely coloured and very realistic, made in sections of rubber, not quite cut through and they wriggle, like that wooden snake you once had, the year Lucie edited *The Serpent*. Now Jill's crying to be taken a walk, so bye-bye. Write again soon.

Love from all to all, BUNNY.

PS. If I have another baby, Heaven forbid just yet, I shall try this new Russian hypnotism business. Everybody says it's absolutely painless, if it proves to be so, then you can come here for your next.



KHARKOV 24

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

20th August 1935

My Darling,

I can't tell you how pleased I was to get your letter just now, I feel as though all the weight of the world had fallen from my shoulders, in fact just in the mood to combat Sonia and Pasha who want to pick Jill up every time she cries, and to-day I'm putting my foot down. Now Kira isn't at home, it's easier to let her cry. Kira has the same too-kind-hearted Russian ideas.

No, Hans never writes to me and certainly no more about Hitler. He wouldn't dare, not to me.

Anthony's weight chart which you sent is marvellous. We have one for Jill too, but it's not going up with such leaps and in one or two places even has gone down, but last week she did gain two hundred and thirty grammes, about nine ounces isn't it? instead of the usual seventy to ninety grammes. Bit of a record what? All the time I'm writing this, she, Jill, is yelling her head off and tears are probably rolling into her eyes, but to hell with these Russian maids and nursemaids and their methods, I will win. The only thing is that just the time when one doesn't go and see what the row's about, she's probably wet.

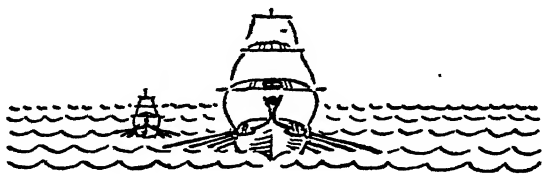
Jill eats an awful lot, my milk in the morning, milk, Cow and Gate [English dried milk sent regularly by air mail], "kasha" and milk, Cow and Gate, at 10 A.M. Vegetable soup and milk, Cow and Gate at 2 P.M., my milk and Cow and Gate 6 P.M., my milk and Cow and Gate 10 P.M., this 10 P.M. is now 7.30 or 9 P.M. and she sleeps till 7 A.M. so I really can't grumble, but I do when she insists on playing loudly after the 7 A.M. feed.

I've just had a long and excited conversation with Sonia about picking Jill up, even getting so far as to tell her that if we two between us can't manage to make the baby do what we want, that is, what *I* want, then I shall get a nurse for Jill from some clinic. I guess Sonia will do what I want now. I hope so, because although I talk grandly about getting someone else for Jill, I've no belief that any other woman would be any better than Sonia. Life in another country can be very trying sometimes, as now when I'm bringing up a child in any but this stupid Russian manner of carrying them everywhere and bouncing them up and down when they cry, just as our parents used to do in England. Of course they think I'm a fool. Well I guess I'll get over it, but oh, gee, I hate the idea of having another baby here, more and more. To begin with, they'll start me off on three-hour feeds, and all through the night, and there'll be the devil to pay I expect, when I get home, and change to my own methods again. Well that's not yet I hope, but it'll have to be fairly soon if baby's going to be good for Jill to play with. The Soviet Union is getting as difficult as anywhere else about marriage, divorce, abortion, and parenthood. That last looks funny. Now, unless it's medically advised, you can't get anyone to do an abortion, and one gets into no end of trouble for not looking after children properly.

Talking of covering Anthony with an eiderdown, Jill's eiderdown is getting the worse for wear, or washing. She's simply hopeless for kicking, and no sheet, blanket, or eiderdown remains on top of her legs long, result they all get wet and have to be washed, but I can't tell you how much I've appreciated it, especially as both her rugs got left behind. Has Anthony got 'em, I hope so.

What about this American book you've got and what about

the sixpenny Dorothy Sayers? I want *The Unpleasantness of the Bellona Club* and *Have His Corpse*. Those are the titles that Blackett told me anyhow. What's *The Documents in the Case*? Have we read that? And then there's one more request, next Christmas if there are any more "Complete Shakespeares" going cheap, will you send me one? Two nights ago, Kira and I went to see *King Lear* by the Jewish Theatre from Moscow, and we were often at a loss to understand the drift of the story, it's so complicated and, my hat, so morbid, but this company, which is famous in Europe I'm told, certainly played marvellously. Even not understanding one word of Yiddish it wasn't boring at all, and the opening scene was magnificent. The decoration I found somewhat bizarre, but interesting. The shore scene was an absolutely empty stage, except for a back curtain of green with the most daring boat, Armada style, head on, in black, orange, and white, and one little black one sailing near it. It was most impressive.



We got home at 1 A.M. and Kira had to start for the station at 10 A.M. so I guess he was glad of this thirty-six-hour train journey as an opportunity to sleep. It's odd, isn't it, a week ago Kira didn't even think of going away, but now he's already travelling in style, that is with Intourist, with Professor and Mrs Blackett. He was at Cambridge when Kira was there, but is now director of some institute for physics in London, perhaps the University, I forget. This is a semi-official visit, and as their friends here, the Hautermanns, are incapacitated by dysentery and pregnancy, if they swapped it might end both their troubles, Kira had the chance of going.

I made him take the chance, because he will have no trouble with tickets and things, as the Blacketts have everything done for them, and will get a much-needed rest in company he likes. They are going to Tiberda, accent on the "da," in the Caucasus for ten days to do nothing, and then will gradually drop down to the coast, Suhum or Sochi, and then home either via Black Sea and Odessa or by road to Sevastopol and then by train.

Oh, Bambino, think of it. The Caucasus, olive-trees, walnut-trees, every flower and fruit the world knows, the climate, with its vivid odours, the peasant dress so gay and original, the smell of the pine-trees and the mountains themselves, next to the Himalayas for height, and better I think for a holiday, because they are climbable. The Alps and Switzerland nothing by comparison. Kira will come back without shingles, fit and loving and teasing all over again. He needed a holiday so.

In the meantime Sonia and I will spring-clean and have a fight with Jill *re* the carrying business, but as a background our life still has "cockroaches." I try to believe they're less, but my Flit and energy have almost gone so the fight is not so keen, and I've now got to the stage of saying, well, the winter will kill most of them.

Last night I went to see *Chapayev*. The cinema was rotten. The air was foul, it was damned hot, the sound was bad, although I'd been told it was good, and the photography not as marvellous as some I've seen, but nevertheless I came away feeling as sad as I can remember. The whole thing seemed so near and so real. It is great art.

Chapayev is a civil war hero who led irregular forces in the steppes south and east of Stalingrad. The film shows this rough but natural leader of men and how he developed under the advice of the political commissar Furmanov. I was left with the feeling that had Furmanov not been taken away, there would not have been such a tragic ending. Chapayev was

killed by the Whites. If ever you get the chance to see it, do go, and write and tell me what you think.

Furmanov is still living and a journalist in Moscow. It was he who wrote a book of the story and also worked on the scenario of the film. So of course he could make it realistic. But really the fighting seemed to be happening in the cinema. I was shaken, I can tell you.

Reading the ending of your letter reminds me, what kind of ears has Anthony got, are they like Jill's, do they stick out like jug handles? There's a question for a young mother. Anthony is evidently much better than Jill, but then he's got a better mother. Jill has got a little hat from Crimea, Luba and Feydya brought it for her when they came back from their summer holidays. I shall take a photograph one day, but it won't be half as funny as it really is. Jill seems so fair and this hectically coloured cap looks most odd on her.

Now I must go to dinner. Tell Elizabeth I got her *Observer* and will write to her the first time I can find a minute. It is—the *Observer*—about a month old, but Kira and I read it quite thoroughly. We never miss a word of it.

We have some new neighbours, at least the husband is here, the wife and child are in Berlin or Copenhagen or somewhere waiting for a visa. Anyhow last night he gave a party, no chairs, no tables, nothing, so we used isolators out of the laboratory and do you know it was quite jolly, unhappily the host got a little drunk before the end and everyone went away. I had to act as hostess and also interpreter to the woman help, who would insist on washing the dishes when he wanted to sleep. This morning he seems to remember nothing, but is astonished to find two clocks where only one existed yesterday, we cannot discover where the second came from. Thank heavens he is having his flat cleaned and re-decorated, so I hope the insect problem will lessen next year. He's against cockroaches as much as I, so perhaps together we may get clean once more. I only wish Sonia didn't have

to live in the kitchen, but Jill must have a room to herself and neither Kira nor I want to give up his study or the big room to her, Sonia; so needs must, but I think without her living in, I could more easily keep the kitchen clean. It would mean less things in it for one thing.

Yes, the north balcony is finished and marvellous, being almost over an acacia-tree you can imagine how nice it is. I suppose it's the best balcony in the Institute, and after making a fuss I've had it made a really decent size, not one of the little box things they generally stick on. So we have two balconies, according to the weather we use one or the other.

Well, now I must eat. Love to you and John and Anthony.

As ever, EDDIE.

PS. I must say it surprised me when you said the Russian nursery toys which I sent Anthony, as being quite unique, are exactly the same as those in English nursery schools, and in modern English toy-shops. Certainly I had never seen those tall stands with coloured rings on, nor things like egg racks with pegs and mallets to knock through the holes. They are to teach the young not to put a round peg in a square hole! A good idea for any country!

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 24

*1st September 1935*

Dearest,

Thank you for the snaps of Anthony, everyone says he's looking rather like Jill, but I guess that's only because they know he's her cousin.\* How did the vaccination go off, more successfully than Jill's? She will have to go through it all

again in October I expect. Isn't it amazing the way people seem to gather round when there's a baby in the house. I too might have lots of new friends but I just don't, chiefly because I haven't time, but also because I don't want.

What did I say about my feet and legs? Nothing except that they're generally tired. In the first two months I remember I was only conscious of possessing a back, and that because it ached infernally, and often my neck, but after the first month that got better. You seem to be much more energetic and scientific than I ever was or shall be. There's tragedy in our house to-day because Sonia broke Jill's last feeding-bottle. I wonder now why I was a fool and brought only two, so we are having to make shift with an ordinary bottle. Can you imagine the picture, little Jill and this colossal bottle with a little rubber teat on the end, it's like feeding a lamb, and there isn't a teat to be had in Kharkov. I'm not asking for more, I have plenty of English ones but they are for special bottles and Jill can pull them off the ordinary bottle. I hope everything will work out, but it's impossible to be intensely scientific under such circumstances. Furthermore, oranges are not seen here until the winter. I can never fathom the reason, but as oranges have to be imported anyhow why import them only in the winter? And I'm not giving Jill castor oil yet. My doctor comes back to-day and Kira, so I shall get him to come and will ask what about it. Jill is going to bed between 8.30 and 9 P.M. now and sleeping till 6.30, so while Kira has been away I've been going to bed early and feel much rested now. I wish Jill could sit by herself, she would be able to play much longer with her toys by herself. I'm waiting every day for her play-pen to come, we ordered it ages ago. I shan't order from this man any more, he's slow: and a boy, who works much better, has done us three bookshelves in the meantime, quite complicated ones.

My dear, the cockroaches really are less, I think it must have been the Keatings, so if ever you feel flush, or want to

send me a Christmas or birthday present, send me a packet of Keatings—it costs one shilling—and a cheap thriller and you will have earned our undying gratitude. I think in the winter it's never so bad, but I would like to have a little Keatings against the coming of spring.

\* [According to photographs the Russian and English cousins were very alike.]

## I I O

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 24

19th September 1935

My Darling,

Thank you ever so much for the books which arrived, first the Shakespeare, and yesterday the *Infants and Children*. It really is good. I sat tight last night and read it from cover to cover and the only thing that puzzles me is, what's a soap-stick? Does one make it oneself or buy it? Because it seems to me I shall have to get busy with Jill. I'm going to ask Dr Tetz if I can change my programme now because she sleeps till 7 A.M. and insists on going to bed herself at 7.30 P.M. It's marvellous for me, but the present feeding system won't work. If there was a mistake about writing cod-liver oil I made it, I did not mean castor oil. Dr Tetz won't let me give Jill any cod-liver oil until the fresh supply comes in at the end of the month. I shall ask him about the tomato juice, but it seems to me everybody here is against it for children. I guess I shall be trying a bit on the sly.

*Later*

To-day the house seems full of men. They're putting in a telephone after five years of waiting, added to which we have



bought one ton of wood and one ton of coal before the cold weather sets in, so we ought to be feeling full of beans, but I guess I'm just a sentimentalist, I only long to be home again. Jill is lovely, but somehow something's wrong with life. Kira has an awful lot of trouble and worry just now, I wish it would all finish. I guess the whole Institute just wants dynamiting and then a fresh start making. The silly thing is that it's chiefly the foreigners who are making the trouble, truly one or two Russians are with them, but it's all absurd, and anyhow a scientific institute is surely for work and not for scandals.\*

Jill can drink from a cup, but it's not so easy to drop the bottle habit just because they're broken, she doesn't know things like that. However I've had some more made in the Institute. There is a special glass-blower who makes any kind of glass apparatus on the spot, so we're getting along well, especially as I almost don't feed her myself now and that she doesn't seem to miss me.

You might send a few snaps of Anthony some time or I shall completely miss all this interesting period altogether. I wish children would never grow up.

*26th September*

Many happy returns of the day and I hope you're having a jolly day. Paper has run out, so shall finish on back of your Anthony's weight chart; I have studied it carefully, so don't be hurt.

All the week we have had Van de Graaff, the scientist from America whose work Kira has followed so closely. Now Kira is busy building a big—the biggest in the world actually, but that sounds too present-day Russian doesn't it—generator, with which they hope to get seven and a half million voltage. I hope that is right. It is a big step up on the voltage for the atom.

Van de Graaff is rather attractive, but not when talking of negroes and the situation in America. There is no colour bar in Russia. How could there be with a nation this size from Arctic almost to Equator, people are all sizes, shapes, and colours. So are their clothes. I'm told Paul Robeson wishes he'd been born Russian. Kira has been pleased to have Van de Graaff in Kharkov and it has so fallen out that he has been to lunch, supper, and odd drinks quite often, to-day he's gone. But we've done quite a lot of amusing things with him that we couldn't have done without a foreigner in tow. Doesn't that sound like the French in Paris?

Am tired now so will finish later.

BUNNY.

My love to Anthony, and John of course.

Perhaps the Italy-Abyssinian dispute accounts for the loss of the *Observers*. It is regarded seriously here. The dispute I mean. Can't you really see the implications? †

\* [This year there was a wave of suspicion against scientists in Russia. Perhaps, because so much had been given to the scientists in the Soviet, too much had been expected of them in the scheme of national development. Even science could not achieve everything. Two years later the Soviet expelled all foreign scientists from Russia.]

† [The implications were that the League of Nations had met its second major defeat, the first having been over Manchuria, which held considerable interest for Russia. The astute Russians now saw that the system of collective security was just an empty boast, as there was no power to implement League decisions. In England wishful thinking blinded us to the fate awaiting Europe should Italian aggression now be condoned.]

25th October 1935

Marushia,

This isn't in answer to your interesting and amusing letter, it's simply the cheque and a request for a second-hand copy of Stout, A. P., *Human Cancer*, 1932, twenty-two and sixpence, as soon as you can get it through, and will you find out if it's possible to get a copy of any of the articles on "Melanoma and Melanosarcoma" given in the list by the B.M.A., if so please get me: Scott, A. C., Jr., "Five-year Cures of Cancer of Breast and Melanoma," *Surg. Gynec. and Obst.*, 60: 465, 466, February, No. 2A, 1935. Expect you'll have to get a copy of this journal if possible. If the B.M.A. doesn't possess a spare one, and I don't suppose it does, I bet you the Scott bloke has heaps of copies lying idle at home, these people always have, they get about a hundred copies from the printers and never do anything with 'em. Do your best and steal me some. I haven't seen my little Povolotsky for ages, but I'm sure he thinks I've forgotten him and his book. It's more than a year since he asked me. The extra cash will pay for a book or two and present from Jill to Anthony when Christmas comes round, and don't forget.

Love, BUNNY.

I positively have no time for letter-writing. Jill most of all, but matching Sasha and Pasha with Jill still more. I intend to give Jill a Christmas tree if one can be got. I told you, I think, Pasha is Sasha's sister and wants to be nursemaid. Sasha is diminutive for Natasha. I think she is really more responsible than Pasha, but she has been cook so long that it seems a pity to make her nursemaid and have to train up Pasha as cook in her place.

[The year 1935 saw the abolition of rationing in Russia. But it had been a long time since Eddie was conscious of food difficulties. The dried milk had been flown from England because Eddie was determined that Jill's food should be absolutely sterile. But Russian babies thrived in their tens of thousands on the national diet. Cod-liver oil and fruit juices were to be got in plenty and this autumn the State had no financial difficulties. In fact the peasants were paid more for their grain.]

Women were being trained to use gas masks and put out incendiary bombs. Patriotism was highly praised and the armed forces were no longer compelled to pay income tax. The Soviet was preparing for the future. Eddie was fully occupied with Jill and there was little time for letter-writing.]

## I I 2

KHARKOV

*1st March 1936*

Forgive me, darling, but really I never find time to write to one half the people I should write to.

. . . Life rolls on just the same, sometimes Jill's an angel and sometimes not, and I expect I'm not bringing her up a bit scientifically, but I guess I was born lazy, and also just now my neighbour behaves in an interesting manner. He came last July, has corn-coloured hair, and blue eyes, you know that German type, looking like Siegfried in a modern manner. In September he threw a party, when Kira was in the Caucasus mountains, and invited me, and quite officially, as I'm his neighbour, asked me to act hostess at his dance. We all drank merrily, but as he drank most of a bottle of Vodka, I expect for the first time in his life, you can guess he was one over the eight. However when I'd shooed off his

maid, who insisted on washing the dishes there and then, he wishes me good night and kisses my hand and, upon my laughing, took me in his arms and said "To-morrow I shan't be able": problem—how drunk was he?

Anyhow he danced with me in my house after that quite properly when we invited him to bring his wife, who came in September, later. They're not married and the little boy isn't his, or her former husband's, but you can't very well call her his woman, can you, they live too decently to call her his mistress. Anyhow at the New Year "do" for the Institute he danced with me again. At 2 A.M. I was tired so Kira brought me home, the first of anyone, the rest stayed till 5 A.M. He came with us, but as Kira sat in the front, he sat with me and would hold my hand and say "It's impossible," presumably to kiss, but I didn't ask and he didn't say. Next we danced in the Club here, as his wife wasn't there and Kira was drinking beer with Boris down below. Everyone was very gay. Kira went home early and at 3 A.M. I also went home with Johann, it somehow becomes Yoggann when the Germans say it. We walked up and down the Institute grounds for about half an hour, and then sat in the cold, cold snow on a bench. You realise I have a good Russian fur coat and cap, knee-boots, etc. Says he "Ruth's going away in February, I shall be alone, will you come?" It was such a shock to realise that without any other meeting except dancing—for we hardly see each other in the day-time—he had got to such a stage of thought, that I simply murmured "I shall not" and went home. However he proceeds to dance with me when necessary and whisper compliments and there the matter rests. I'm not a bit excited and fear I'm getting old, but I suppose I am flattered or I shouldn't tell you.

Kira and I celebrated our sixth anniversary yesterday by going to see *The Invisible Man* and afterwards drinking Turkish coffee in the best café in town. It was quite nice and as a husband Kira is the world's best. Ivan Vasilitch is mad-

der than ever, just "mad" and not "mad on me," and quite off my map. Landau, whom Ania Kapitza once dismissed from her party, having quarrelled with Kira, never comes to see me but carries on luridly sexual conversations on the telephone when he thinks Kira's out. Sasha Lipunsky is as charming as ever, but as most of the women in the Institute seem to be in love with him I try to be an exception. Another scientist's wife seems to have behaved foolishly while he was in England, but they still live together and look unhappy. However, in spite of all, life's good enough. Food, money, comforts a plenty now, theatres, operas, cinos, parties, all like England but more amusing. We have no grumbles apart from bugs, etc. We can actually get cream to whip, it takes half an hour's beating to have any effect for coffee.

Write soon and say that neither you nor John love me less for being so flirtatious. I guess Kira and I will be together to the end.

Love, BUNNY.

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CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

KHARKOV 24

1st November 1936

Dear Old Bean,

It's disgusting the way we don't keep up a correspondence with one another, but there seems to be so many jobs to do in the day-time and at night, I, at any rate, have no energy.

We have received two Dorothy Sayers—*Busman's Holiday*, not very good, and *Murder Must Advertise*, marvellous. I was just about to write and say we hadn't received any, when these two came, so I thought I'd wait a day or two to

see if the other pair turned up, but they haven't, so do your bit.

Life's a bit too exciting for me at the moment. To make it simpler for you we'll do it numerically.

1. In this riding school I've been going to all summer the authorities of the town demanded that forty women be sent to the military parade on the November 7th celebrations. And as it's a question of every other day, and in the last week every day, and one day for all day, you can imagine I feel decidedly cut off from my family and very "joggled." By this time my rear has of course ceased to resemble a chimpanzee, but the feeling is there. I leave you to imagine the wreck I shall be after the following programme:

November 4th, evening. Three hours, not less, riding through centre of town and rehearsal for parade.

November 5th, three cheers to Guy Fawkes. The Institute "party" for the celebrations, dancing until 4 A.M.

November 6th, 10 A.M. Riding, presumably all day.

November 7th, 4 A.M. Riding in parade for an unknown time, 'spect we shall get home about 2 o'clock.

All the same I can't pretend I don't enjoy the Revolution celebrations, because I do.

2. Apart from the riding there's all this preparation for various evening parties in our club. I am head of the "artistic" side so it means I must rush round after flowers and lamps, paper, etc. etc., and the club has not money to do it with, and I certainly have no time for all the meetings as:

3. I am head of the Institute gardening and am in a panic with tulips and roses and bushes; all of which must be got into the ground before the frost, not to mention sheltering the blasted things before the snow.

And finally, on quite a different plane, with my head and legs in such a whirl, my neighbour has decided that even at thirty-three I'm not so unattractive as you'd believe me to

be. Kira is very busy trying to get one piece of his "tube" finished before the seventh, and is working nearly all night every night, and is worn out, and am I?

I'm supposed to be buying flowers this morning, so guess I'll potter. Jill is well, only is a little devil at night and screams for Mammy. Last night I simply wouldn't take any notice, but for three-quarters of an hour it was such a racket I buried my head under the bedclothes and wept. I can stand all her shrieks, but when she begins to sob and say "Mammy, Mammy," I'm done for.

Do write some time, other than a postcard, and tell me what you're doing. I hope when the winter comes, and I have no gardening and no riding, I shall feel less of a rag.

When do you think you'll come to Kharkov? You'd better warn Mother in time because I now warn you that I shall keep the entire contents of your suitcases. I hope I shall be able to send you home with some sort of covering, but as regards stockings, underwear, and frocks and coats you can say good-bye, because the Soviet Union is getting too well dressed for words.

Love, EGGU.

## II 4

KHARKOV 24  
CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
9th January 1937

Bambino,

I have to thank you for three books, *The Jungle*, *Murder on the Links*, which we'd read, and for Jill that marvellous little *Golden Cockerel*. The last was really a brain wave. About other Penguin books I'd better tell you the ones we've



read: *Ariel*, by Maurois, *Autobiography*, Margot Asquith, *A Passage to India*, by E. M. Forster, *The Hounds of Spring*, by Sylvia Thompson, *Morning Tide*, Neil Gunn. We want *A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway, *Death of a Hero*, Richard Aldington, *The Party Dress*, Hergesheimer, and *The Black Diamond*, by Francis Brett Young. But, whatever you do, never send us a Wodehouse, we can't stand him in Kharkov.

I must stop and attend to Jill. Will write again to-morrow.

BUNNY.

PS. About the D.'s, I think nothing can be done. They are old-fashioned and to them, I suppose, an illegitimate child is something horrible. For myself, I'd rather D. had twenty illegitimates than be so fascistic.

[The last remark, as slight in itself as is the remark about Wodehouse, can yet be taken as a straw in the wind of Russian thought that was beginning to blow so strongly against German fascism. The censor could always prevent political expression of opinion, but a comment on the then popular Wodehouse seemed unimportant. Four years later Wodehouse was broadcasting for the Nazis, who had seen, as clearly as the Russians, that his ideology was in fact fascist.

The year 1937 saw important developments in Russia. It was recognised that war with the fascist powers was both inevitable and imminent. Stalin prepared utterly to destroy all those who "should thrust their pig snouts into the Russian garden." He began by eliminating treachery and possible fifth-column activity within his own borders. The Western Powers were shocked when eight army chiefs were tried and executed for "habitual and base betrayal of military secrets to a hostile fascist power." They had not heard the name of Quisling nor understood Hitler's technique. But Stalin's preparations for a strong united Russia, which should

face the enemy as one man, went further than the army. He was determined that no news of importance should be filtered through to Germany. Every German scientist was this year expelled from Russia. Soviet scientific plans, the central core of the Russian peace and war effort, could not be known to Germans. Nor must they be known to other nations. Soon all foreign scientists had left Russian soil. Whatever their nationality, these foreign scientists seemed to suffer a strange homesickness for the U.S.S.R., which until war threatened Europe had treated them as honoured guests, denied them nothing, and given them a greater facility for research than they would have had elsewhere. Russia had profited, but so had they.

Except for the fact that certain names disappear from the letters, Eddie gave no indication that any such thing was happening. But certain scientists visited London openly lamenting their exile, and while there called on Eddie's sister to give her the latest news of Kharkov.

Eddie was a great source of interest to them all. She was different from the other scientists' wives. In the first place, unlike other married women she did not earn her living. In the time-honoured English manner she did a great deal of work that was purely voluntary. Her gardening excited their admiration, and she had made for herself an official position in Kharkov as Gardening Advisor. She was an unequalled organiser of social events and her gaiety was never-ending. In that quality of light-heartedness she was very Russian and no one in the Kharkov Institute thought of her as a foreigner, though they did think her manner of bringing up a child was distinctly odd. Yet that was a purely personal affair and they regarded the result with interest. They commented on the fact that although Eddie did not earn, yet she and Kira were as well off as those couples who were both earning, because Kira's income was so much higher than most. Also their future was bright, for scientists were to be given a pension

equivalent to their earnings after they had worked for twenty-five years, provided only that ten of those years they had worked for the Soviet Government. Kira would easily fulfil those conditions before he was fifty and so would never have a smaller income than he had now.

No, in spite of its Russian furnishings, Eddie's flat seemed wholly English. Perhaps the illusion was so complete because it had an open fireplace which was at once the wonder and the shame of Kharkov. That fireplace provided an endless topic of conversation. Why? Because there was no smoke nuisance in the clear skies of Kharkov, no factory chimneys in this manufacturing town to make a "black country" of the surrounding steppes. In England you burned coal and wasted its products to an incredible extent, but in Russia the factories were run by electricity and the homes were heated by closed stoves when central heating was not available. The authorities would not allow open fireplaces in their city, but Eddie was an Englishwoman, and so favoured.

Yes, Eddie spoke excellent Russian, though in general she and Kira spoke English together. She had read widely of the Russian classics as well as the Soviet moderns, and the usual accusation levelled against the English living abroad, that they remained for ever insular, could not be levelled against Eddie. Eddie "belonged."

Her violin? Since the birth of Jill it had lain idly in its case. But Eddie was not idle. The child absorbed her. That and her constant care of Kira. Never were a couple so ideally happy. Soon Kira would coax the violin back into Eddie's arms. He played his piano so wonderfully well and he liked Eddie to play with him.

Was Eddie politically minded now? Eddie took no active part in politics. But some things surprised her. How could English people continue to feel as Sir Edward Grey had felt: "My politics, now as always, remain entirely detached from my private life, my private thoughts, my pleasures and

my friendships." Could the English not understand, what the Russians understood so clearly, that politics condition the life of the nation and the life of the nation conditions the life of the individual, even to peace and war? Could democratic England stand by and watch the fight of fascism with the same dispassionate interest that it watched a boxing match and cheered the winner? England's continued pacific policy was completely bewildering to the circle in Kharkov. Stalin gave a clear lead in his anti-German policy. Naturally England would not follow Stalin. But why ignore Churchill and Lloyd George? But Eddie could hardly write her mind in letters. There was an English censor as well as a Russian one, was there not? Eddie's letters must be of trivialities only.

One last point. Did Eddie's letters talk much of bugs, this lover of Russia asked anxiously. English people used the presence of bugs in Russia to condemn the Revolution. They might as well use the rainfall of an English summer to condemn democracy. Bugs like raindrops were climatic and almost as difficult to check.

Eddie's sister read the next Russian letter in a strangely chastened mood.]

## 115

KHARKOV 24

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16, U.S.S.R.

*10th January 1937*

Marushia,

Wouldn't you like to inquire what can be done about sending some Keatings before the spring? I'm getting in a panic again, though there's not a one now, there never is a bug in winter. Do try to send in time. I can start the campaign most efficiently while Sonia is away as she is now. But doing

her work, this weather, makes my hands like nutmeg-graters. So I suppose I shall be glad to have her back.

Kira was pleased about the Pushkin, bless you. It is marvellously translated, with exactly the same rhythm as the original. Pushkin is more poet than prose writer, and if you must compare him to an English writer perhaps he is more like Byron than anyone else. But of course Pushkin is Russia's greatest writer of all and revered as we reverence Shakespeare. .

I seem to have no time for letters now with Sonia away. How's your babe going on? It will be a wonderful change to come to Russia and forget both your babies. Everybody I know seems to be in the same state as yourself. Owing to your proposed visit I am not awaiting a babe. So if you don't come I shall be mad. It will be a waste of a year.\*

I notice you haven't mentioned George VI yet. I like to think of all the stamps that have been made and all the coronation mugs and pots for Edward VIII having to be scrapped, and pillar boxes and what-nots. It's so lovely. We were very impressed with his woman, she looks quite sensible. [Edward VIII abdicated on 10th December 1936.]

Am pottering off to bed now. Write me something interesting next time, and if you can, do something about the Keatings. You might think of Jill with cockroaches, if that will move you to energy, and when you come bring a stock with you. Keatings is the best I think. Flit moves 'em, but Keatings keeps them away.

Love to you all, EDDIE.

*12th January 1937*

Kira just came home in a terrible state, owing to carelessness on somebody's part, while Kira came to lunch, they have to undo and re-do one and a half month's work. He's absolutely sick, and so am I because now there seems to be a

series of rows, and criticisms without end. It's always like that, if the work's going well, no praise, and if it's going wrong, hell.

I keep meaning to send Anthony some toys too, but am half afraid of the duty, toys being among some of the worst things for this I think. You'll get 'em when we get some money. I nearly bought a host of those lovely horses and things that I bought you once, but decided they'd be in atoms on arrival.

Much love, BUNNY.

\* [Eddie's sister was just awaiting the arrival of her second baby. She proposed to visit Eddie the following September. But she was to find that it was not much easier for her to get permission to visit Russia privately, than it had been for Eddie to get permission to come to England. There was the same series of exasperating delays. It would have been simple to visit Russia as one of a conducted party. But in that case she could not have left the party to visit Kharkov and travel to Crimea and elsewhere with Eddie. She was officially told it would be forbidden. To go to Russia on a conducted tour was therefore out of the question. It meant travelling alone, or not at all. But this was the year that the Soviet expelled foreigners from her soil, in preparation for the dangerous years ahead. It was natural that difficulties were put in the way of one Englishwoman seeking to visit Russia. But Eddie's sister persisted throughout the summer. It was not in her nature to be defeated easily.]

KHARKOV 24

*27th February 1937*

Dear Old Bean,

Well, the Keatings arrived to-day. I would like to stand them all in a row on the mantelpiece and gaze on their beauty, but fear grasping neighbours might beg for some. Hence it is all hidden away so that even Sonia can't help herself. Fancy treating insect powder like gold, but it's really efficient and I bet I've got less pests than anyone.

I suppose I can never liquidate "for ever and a day," as the house is so badly built, and the beasts are bound to come investigating from the surrounding flats; but gee, it gives me a safe feeling, all ready for the fray and what-not, and if it's possible to arrange another supply some day, not just yet, I'll willingly blow a fiver. I've written to Keatings so if you haven't done so, it doesn't matter.\*

How are you feeling these days? Gosh, it's a world of babies-to-be, every friend I've got is about to produce some live-stock. It makes me feel useless but I'm waiting your visit, and as an antidote will finish my riding lessons in the spring. I've been presented with a badge and am now a "Voroshilovsky-Cavalryist." As well as the silver badge we wear the smartest green riding habits. It is our uniform. You would be impressed if you saw us.

*9th March 1937*

Sasha's wife, the Cossack, is absolutely marvellous, the best woman rider in Kharkov. I'm in the "also-rans" because I can't be bothered with the stupid little journeys on the tram to and from the riding school.†

Your reply to my request is marvellous. I say "Let me

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know definitely if you are coming in September" and you say "John is also thinking of coming . . . but don't be surprised if he drops out." I ask you. What do you want me to do? To fix things in a Sanatorium we must arrange it early and it's very difficult to alter it afterwards, because we shall try to do it through the Institute and it is illegal to sell the "pass." So please let me know definitely how many people are coming and for how long, and what else you want to do besides the Black Sea? ‡

We have received two more Penguins, which means we have received six altogether, that is [1] *Farewell to Arms*. [2] *My South Sea Island*. [3] *The Jungle*. [4] *The Poisoned Chocolate Case*. [5] *The Rasp*. [6] *Trent's Last Case*. All of which entertained me vastly, even *My South Sea Island*, though its conceit is unlimited, isn't it?

Have just read *Jews without Money*, printed in Moscow, and to my great astonishment learned that Jews have a tremendous dislike for Christians, in New York at any rate.

Must prepare a meal for Kira now, poor lamb he must be in bed for a week more.

Re your question what presents should you bring to Russia, I should think anything except hot-water bottles or powder cases, the former can be got very cheaply now, so no more lying cold in bed at nights. Do you remember my first winter? I tried to think of it last summer when it was so hot. All comforts this winter à la West End London, hot-water bottles, radiators, electric light over bed which works, good food, Russian food when plentiful is good you know. Powder is plentiful too, I gave both Luba and Marina the latter, and Sonia isn't a good object for such finery so think of something else, only not clothes, because I want all you'll bring, and if John comes you must bring Kira something, he's awfully badly off.

Yours, EDDIE.



*Later*

Kira lying ill in bed informs me that we got *Murder on the Links* not long ago, but I don't remember that anything else came with it, so now perhaps you can reckon up how many went astray.

\* [Eddie's sister gave Keatings a weekly order to post their powder by air mail to Kharkov, which they did until the summer of 1938, when the Soviet forbade the import of insect powder on the grounds that Russia was now manufacturing insecticides of her own.]

† [Friends reported that she rode extremely well. Cossack standards are high and world-famous.]

‡ [June came, but the hoped-for arrangements to visit Russia were still not completed, so Eddie's sister went for a holiday to Italy. She proposed now to go to Kharkov the following spring, and sail to Leningrad, like Eddie before her, as soon as the Baltic was clear of ice in May. Thus, the "waste of a year" in having a second child as noted in Letter 115 came about.]

## 117

KHARKOV 24

CHAJKOVSKAJA 16

5th July 1937

Dearest Bambino,

I expect you are back with your beloved John ere this, so as a thankoffering you just jolly well sit down and write me at least twenty pages, I'm fed up with one, two or three pages. You could have written while you stayed with Lucie, or were you too tired after your journey across France? People here think Englishwomen are very odd to want to travel so, while their babes are still so young. I brought Jill back at two

months and you go for a holiday to the Lido when "the Seagull" is no older. Did he recognise you when you got back? But he couldn't possibly of course. Anthony would though, and as to John——

It's a long time to May or whenever it is you're thinking of coming, so there's heaps of time for planning where or what we shall do. It doesn't look as though I shall be having a baby. Kira's not keen on my going through it again. Personally I think it's a waste not to, because next year Jill will be able to go to the Kindergarten and if I get used to being a free woman again, I shan't want another baby later, but who knows.

I think I don't like Crimea for the same reason you disliked the Lido, only of course I do see that the countryside, or the coast as I should say, is lovely, but all these Sanatoriums, or rest-homes, take up so much of the actual coast that there's not much left for ordinary people. Each house has miles of ground to it and only people staying there can wander at will. The beach is by now—it wasn't in May—divided into separate portions for sun-bathing for the inmates of the Sanatoria, and altogether there's a flavour of organised holidaying that doesn't appeal to me. The Sanatorium where Garry and Marina were staying is very nice, but it's a long way from the sea. I do like to sit in the sun on the beach early, but I can't stand it all day, nor these masses of human flesh sprawling over hill and vale. No, let's agree the Crimea is lovely but when you remember that almost everybody wants to go there in the summer the charm is gone. In the autumn, the public goes to eat tons of grapes, so only the winter remains, and then the sea isn't so nice.

Everybody exclaimed when I brought Jill home at the end of May, at her still pink-and-white complexion, but you can't really sit such a baby in the sun to get brown can you? Obviously she's not the "browning" sort, like me. She's in the air all day but when she gets over this attack of "koleet"

—do you know any Russian yet?—I hope she'll get stronger. What is "koleet" in English? It isn't dysentery, but it's next door. I looked in a dictionary and it says "colic," but I don't think it's that.

I expect you've got your figure back much more than I, even now. In spite of riding and swimming and digging, I always fear I'm becoming the true Russian woman, tummy miles out and hair on end.

Hurry up with *Busman's Honeymoon*. A Russian acquaintance of ours has just come back from spending two months in England and brought masses of books to read. I shall be able to read all Conrad and most of the lesser-known D. H. Lawrence and Maugham, and I've just read *Green Mansions* by Hudson, so although I sometimes think my conversational English is going to the dogs, I can still read lots.

You'd better get a book specially for the list of possible things I shall ask you to bring among your luggage next year, needles, darning thread and wool, those lovely plaits of wool or silk are so useful, safety-pins, masses of 'em, nursery ones for Jill and little ones for me, one or two interesting belts, as many nice and exciting buttons and clasps for belts that you can reasonably bring, either loose or on your frocks; which latter I shall probably steal from you. One consolation you'll be travelling home light. Some kind of summer shoes, you know the kind, crepe-rubber soles and heels, with two straps of material over the foot, beach sandals I expect, and an umbrella. I can't think of anything more at present, but if I mentioned anything before, put it down too. What's my coat like? I hope it's more serviceable than the brown one I had when I was home last time. It's impossible as regards dust.

6th July 1937

To-day's "free-day" and of course it's raining. It doesn't make much difference to me but I'm always sorry for the

people who've been waiting all week to bathe, it's been so hot, and now it's so fuggy and wet. As far as I can see Lloyd George has still got as much sense left as any of your new politicians. Eden may be handsome, I don't think so, but I gather it's the general opinion, but Christ, what a politician.

Guess I'd better finish rambling.

Much love, BUNNY.

[When this letter was written Neville Chamberlain had been Prime Minister of England for exactly six weeks. His friendship for Italy was apparent. Anthony Eden, who had visited Russia in 1935 with Eduard Beneš and Pierre Laval, continued as Foreign Minister. The foreign policy for which Eden was officially responsible, but which he did not control, was contrary to his conviction and he resigned the following February. But meanwhile he was associated in Russian minds with that policy of appeasement which Stalin condemned in all his speeches.

In England, Mr Churchill gave regular warning, but every speech fell on deaf ears, and it is doubtful whether the readers of the *Manchester Guardian* paid any more attention to the speeches of Mr Lloyd George, whom that paper quoted in full. But Russia was reading his speeches and loudly applauding them.

The "Father of the House" was saying: "The serious deterioration which has taken place during the last few years is attributable very largely to the sinister and powerful way in which foreign affairs have been handled by mighty militarist states which are open and avowed enemies of freedom and democratic government; and, on the other hand, to the feeble, hesitant, and pusillanimous way in which they have been mishandled by states which still adhere to the principle of a free democracy." And at the end of 1937 Lloyd George said: "Do you notice how General Franco has now joined the pact? . . . He is already in alliance with the other two

dictators. If he wins—and Germany and Italy are doing their best to give him victory and we are doing our best to make it impossible for others (here referring to Russia) to fight for freedom in Spain—if he wins you will have four dictatorial Powers: Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan. Dictatorship is winning . . . and the leaders of Democracy are retreating and retreating and retreating. . . . We are putting ourselves in a position which is a dangerous one, and may be a disastrous one if you have to fight again as in 1914—the factors then in our favour are now against us as the result of our careless, cowardly policy of the last few years.”]

## 118

ХАРЬКОВ

29th July 1937

Darling,

Kira took lots of snaps of Jill last week-end. He threatens to do so to-morrow too. You can ask Mother to show you. It's certainly not a Jewish face, my old little snub-nose. I expect she's as charming as Anthony.

We think "The Seagull" is a lovely name for the new babe. Does he really cry just like that? Nice of John to say he does anyway.

By the way, we've bought Anthony a few wooden toys for his birthday. I think there's some snag about sending toys, a lot of duty or something like that, so that's why it's so humble. Anyhow I'll send it some day and if the duty is too high, you can get it back from me, and if not, I suppose you won't mind? It's from "Jillikin."

Don't know what's the matter with me lately, feel sore and on the raw, can't sleep, can't eat, and don't know what to do about another babe. I don't particularly want one but it

seems mean to Jill, not to give her a brother or sister. Kira says "No," but is willing to adopt. I don't mind either way, but how can I be sure I shall make no difference between it and Jill? How can I be sure its antecedents are alright? Oh, lots of hows. Anyhow what do you say? Three rooms isn't much, but there are many people worse off of course, and Jill would be frightfully pleased.

Love to all and we didn't get the new Sayers yet.

BUNNY.

PS. For heaven's sake don't tell Mother I wrote about adopting a child.

Re-reading your letter about masses of furniture and my present of another piece, it isn't very important is it, when, if you hadn't thought of it before, I shall probably never see Mother and Father again.

I begin to think you in England are all asleep or deaf and blind, nobody seems to realise what's going on in Europe or what's going to be. For you and me it's not so tragic, we're still young enough to get through another war, without accidents of course. But I don't see how I can get home very soon, and the next war isn't far off, if Germany or Japan have their way. So what's one more table if it gives Mother pleasure. I can give Father something next time. I'm only terribly sorry they can't see and know my little Jillikin. Never mind, regret won't alter things.

Write as much as you can while you can, afterwards it'll be no use wishing you had.

I'm not sure you'll get a visa, but try.

EGGU.

[Russia had seen Great Britain take no action against the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, no action against the Italian submarines which torpedoed British ships, no action when Hitler had marched into the Rhineland, no action against

Japan when they took Shanghai, no action in Spain when Churchill advocated it as essential to the defence of the British Empire, so that the cause there championed by Russia should prevail. Every reader will add to the list and understand why Eddie was doubtful whether the Soviet would welcome a British visitor to a country that felt itself enemy to the Axis Powers, when Chamberlain, by every means in his power, was pursuing his policy of friendship with the Axis.]

119

KHARKOV 24

*29th August 1937*

Dearest,

I've discovered where to get films developed, printed and enlarged and I think they don't do it badly if the enclosed are anything to judge by. If you don't want to keep these photographs of Jill send them to Mother. I expect she'll be able to give them to somebody who's interested to know how Jill turned out.

I'm very glad the toys arrived and meet with your approval. Shall try sending you some of those queer animals, from China, that Ania Kapitza collected. I expect if well packed they'll be alright, only I'll collect some nice ones first and they're not always to be found.

About the things you're going to bring for me. Tell John there's no need to charter a ship, you must simply bring what you can and let the rest hang. Your luggage must be normal, at least normal for some clothes-loving woman which neither of us seem to be now. I've lost that love and you never had it, only all the women here have gone crazy on clothes and for Kira's sake I hate to be badly dressed.

Don't tell Mother this one, but the other day I was talking to Dr Yebnin Ebreure, my one English pupil, and I happened to have on a new frock. Says he, "You get more and more beautiful," meaning my dress. I, "Oh, well, I must show Rosa that we can dress well in the Soviet Union too," in view of an expected visitor from America, who afterwards didn't come. He, "Generally you only dress up nicely once or twice a year." I think Mother wouldn't recognise that as me would she?

Glad somebody noticed the Dirigible stamps on my letters, they're rather nice aren't they?

Haven't you taken any snaps of the "Seagull" by the way? You talk of Anthony being spoilt, it's the same with Jill, only to be honest, I think her clothes attract the attention and it's only afterwards that people notice Jill. I don't think Jill's beautiful, but she's clean and quaint, and for me she's simply charming, and Kira is crazy about her and when, as to-day, she produces a little temperature, you'd think the world was coming to an end.

I didn't ask Kira what he feels about music when he's ill, but I think he must feel the same as I do, because the first thing he does when he gets up is to play and play the piano. But he plays a lot at all sorts of odd moments, and how lovely it is to hear him. Had he chosen music instead of science for a career he'd have been a really great pianist.

How odd, can't remember anything about that journey from the Pyrenees with you, except asparagus omelette on the train, and you saying that there were probably bugs in the bed in Paris, and my thinking that it didn't matter much. How little I knew in those days.

Write me a long letter soon and can't you send me some snaps? I've forgotten what you all look like.

Much love from all to all.

BUNNY.



*25th September 1937*

Darling,

This is to wish you Many Happy Returns for to-morrow, getting on aren't we, thirty-seven.

I'm having a wonderful week's gallivanting in Moscow. Kira's here for the "Atom Nuclear" conference and I am staying with Luba. She's quite nice this time though she's never so gentle as Marina. We trot into town and eat ices and have manicures and spend lots of money, but after to-morrow we'll be back in Kharkov and back to work. The amount of gardening and planting that's got to be done frightens me, not to mention the Club which isn't opened yet, and it's nearly October 1st.

Of course we've done the "sights," the underground, the canal, the shops and the trolley buses and in fact everything's wonderful. Moscow is really civilised.

The underground is simply beautiful. Every station is different, and although we have little criticisms to make about a plaque here or a frieze there, the whole thing is really praiseworthy. There are about a dozen stations as yet open and mostly they're colossal, not like the London tubes, which are just two narrow tubes running parallel. Only two stations give that impression here. The others are all simply wonderful marble halls. Reminds me of the old song "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls," only here the marble is in glorious colours, not just black and white. Indeed a place to see, place to walk, and place to breathe, and not very stuffy. The escalators on two stations are magnificent, about twice as long as the longest London one. This sounds like an American showing a tourist round New York, but it's so impressive I *must* talk about it.

The canal is very fine. It was opened this summer. A lot

of the workers making it were prisoners, but when they see the result of four and a half years' work, they must feel it was worth while to be on a job like that, better than English criminals breaking useless stones on Dartmoor anyway. If you could see the new canal stations in Moscow, a broad granite staircase leads down to the pier and from that pier you can get to the White Sea—if ever you'd want to go to such a cold spot—the Baltic Sea, that is Leningrad, and the Caspian Sea all by this canal. But the trip yesterday was more than tiring because we stupidly went on a single-decker, and although the boats have such a nice appearance from the bank, and are lovely to look at inside, they're not very convenient for such a long trip. It is eighty miles from Moscow to the Volga end of the canal. We should have gone on a double-decker, probably we didn't realise these single-deckers are really for the intermediate stops, so we had nowhere to walk and nowhere to eat, stupid of us.

The locks on the canal are attractive, each one has a different style of architecture and often a different colour of stone or concrete. Round each lock young trees have been planted and flowers, and they'll be lovely in a year or two. Sea-gulls fly past and the "Sea of Moscow" is a hundred miles across. But one station after the locks was ghastly, a little wooden shanty and the "mitta tatter" something beyond imagination. The future and the past in juxtaposition.

I've spent lots of money and intend to buy myself a pair of light summer shoes to-morrow. Then next year I won't be barefoot. We haven't been to the theatre. No time, and tickets are hard to get, because although there are forty theatres in Moscow everybody goes, and goes regularly. You'll find Luba's maid or a railway porter or train driver just as keen on opera as any English highbrow, and it's the same with the theatre. It's like you say in England everybody goes to the pictures once a week whatever's on. Here you often see queues standing for hours to book tickets for next week's show. Even

then lots get turned away. We are lucky this week, Feydya has got four tickets for *Prince Igor* in the Bolshoi Theatre. Bolshoi means big and Maly means little. There is a Maly Theatre too. The Bolshoi is the opera-house and its productions are very similar to the Paris Opera, but bigger stage and most magnificent costumes and scenery. But in Russia the singers must be able to act just as well as they sing. So I'm fed up that Kira says we must get home the day of the opera, for we'll miss it.

We flew here and intend to fly back. It's so much quicker than the train, four hours instead of eighteen and much more convenient.

I'm longing to see Jill again. A week here is nice for a change, but there's no place like home and Kira wants to work and play his own piano.

How are you all and how's the "Sea-gull"? He's frightfully amusing on the snaps you sent. Everybody is horrified that he's "sitting" already but I'm glad you sent them. It's a good one of John too isn't it? And Anthony is a real boy.

We've bought Jill lots of toys and books here, and material for pyjamas, and altogether she'll be thrilled to death, and material for Sonia for two frocks in the summer and for me one, and as you can guess we'll be penniless for the rest of the month if we don't leave soon.

Kira gave a very good report at the Moscow Conference everyone says, and personally I'm glad his work is going alright and hope it will be so to the end.

Did I tell you we got the Dorothy Sayers? And what about some more Keatings? I brought a tin with me here to Luba's, in case, and my hat what a mercy! The first night it was ghastly, dozens of big fat bugs crawling all over the bed and millions of little 'uns. It reminded me of my first night in Leningrad. I got up quick and gave 'em a damn good sprinkle of Keatings. The next day Luba asked us whether the bugs bit us, quite calmly. But I sprinkled all round that morning,

and in the evening when Kira and I retired I again sprinkled the sheets, and the next morning found twenty dead corpses under the sheet and since then only one or two have appeared. But of course the Keatings is finished so I'm glad we're going before the next generation comes. Anyhow it's all in a lifetime, and it's not been a bad week. Plenty to eat and trotting about on the underground and wearing my best clothes has restored my self-respect, and altogether it has been a change from Kharkov, where I am awfully lazy about my appearance.

Now just write me a long letter, at least twenty pages, and keep well all of you.

How do you like these stamps? I never saw them before but I don't think they're specially new.

Love to all from all, and kind regards from Luba and Feydya.

Your BUNNY.

## I 2 I

KHARKOV 24

*31st March 1938*

Dearest,

I meant to ask you several times to re-write me that bit of Hilaire Belloc's "The tiger is a lovely pet . . ." and something about "for Mothers of large families." Don't forget.

Your last impersonal note was decidedly depressing, but from our point of view quite pleasing that the "man in the street" isn't blindly following Prime Minister Chamberlain. I must say we admire Eden for resigning.

Washed my hair yesterday and to-day it's like a haystack. All the days lately are spent in preparation for our holiday,

mending summer socks and summer frocks, because certainly there's no money for new ones until we see how much we can save for rooms and travel. With Jill's nurse we make four to pay for now, not two.

We're happy in that we've discovered and bought some real coffee, firstly we bought some green coffee, in beans, here: and then Luba sent me two kilos of roasted beans from Moscow, so for the summer I think we're alright.

I've just been reading *Anna of the Five Towns*. I can't say you and I were brought up in such an atmosphere, but it makes me doubly glad to live in the Soviet Union when I think that Jilly will be far away from all these unwritten do's and don'ts.

Looking through some old letters to-day, I found one from Lucie. Do you want it back again? If you write, give her love from me.

Do you . . . Kira here showed me a "Low" cartoon and I've completely forgotten what I wanted to say.

Write soon.

With love to you all, BUNNY.

[It has been impossible to identify the particular cartoon in question, but it is interesting and also understandable to note that Low's cartoons could appear in Russia.]

I 2 2

KHARKOV 24  
CHAJKOVSKAJA 16  
2nd April 1938

To be honest I still don't know if it's true that the address changed to 6.

My Dearest Bambino,

Yes, the world is in a mess isn't it, as you wrote on March 11, I suppose you think it's even more so now, but England seems rather hopeless or helpless at the moment.

Our "North Pole People" have got to Moscow at last. In Leningrad there are no flowers to be bought as they were all bought up for greeting the "Papanintsy." After nine months on an ice flow in the Arctic they must be very glad to be home again.

What with your letter and Kira getting his salary and my discovering some coffee, already several months unknown, in town I feel distinctly on top of the world.

Isn't it one of your friends who collects stamps? I haven't sent these before I think, the green one is for the flight over the Pole to America, and the red one's for the Paris Exhibition. Jill is afraid at parties, too, and only squeals with delight at the other children's antics, herself sitting tight, generally on my knee. Anyhow parties aren't much go when organised, some informal and unexpected visitor is much more successful. Is Anthony afraid of strangers? Jill is impossible. We had Garry and another man from Leningrad, for four days. She wouldn't even go into the same room for a whole day. On leaving, they presented her with the most original and startling presents, of course she wept and said why were they going away. It's quite impossible to persuade her not to be afraid, she gets absolutely panicky, and one can't use force, can one? Thanks for bothering about the book. It hasn't come yet.

About the Keatings, I got a chit from the Post Office but when I went to collect the parcel they wouldn't give it to me without a doctor's prescription that I "absolutely needed this medicine." All my talking was in vain, so the parcel is sitting in the Post Office. Will let you know developments. Obviously somebody somewhere in censors' department doesn't understand a word of English.

Love to you all, BUNNY.

[The events of March, 1938, convinced many people in England that war with Germany could not long be delayed. Eddie's sister redoubled her efforts to get to Russia immediately, knowing that by the end of the year it might be impossible. She wrote jubilantly on the 1st of April that she would arrive in May. She had won her way.]

## I 23

KHARKOV

*14th April 1938*

My Dear,

Here we are in the middle of April and still winter. We had such lovely spring weather a short time ago and now for a week we've been having hail and snow and frost and every kind of misery out of season.

Don't be silly about your coming to Russia, it isn't that Kira and I don't want you to visit us, only that it will be kinder to us if you wait a bit. You may think the "International boiling pot" isn't boiling quite so furiously, but Abyssinia, Spain, China and Austria, not to mention Czechoslovakia, are still serious to us, and England's policy! well, God knows what! If you're going to have an election in the autumn, and the Lord knows what may happen before then, I hope you'll send this mangy Government to ———.

It's impossible *not* to mention politics, isn't it? however hard one tries, and I don't expect we see eye to eye always, but I hope, nearer than Hans and I would. As to Austria, not all the newspapers can be lying. Lucie surely would not go ski-ing there if there was any likelihood of unpleasantness, or else wouldn't be allowed, or, are your authorities so sure of peace? \*

You might explain as cryptically as you can some "gift"

from Father, stocks or shares, that are paying seven per cent. I have an idea that I want to hand the lot over to you, but don't know how it can be done, 'spect we'll have to leave it until we see one another, only it's so useless to me and you could use it for the children if not for yourself.

Kira and Jill and Sonia and I hope to go to Crimea for a month in May.† Kira and I are so looking forward to it. We shall probably be in a Sanatorium and Jill and Sonia in the near-by village.

I should think the Keatings problem has settled itself if, as you say, Keatings are posting regularly to me, they must have got a permit. I never tried to get a doctor's certificate, how could I knowing that Keatings is powder for insects?

Jill's alright, but no hope of our getting over to England soon.

Much love, BUNNY.

We shall be home again about the 10th June so you can have a month's rest from letter-writing, don't know any address in Crimea.

Love, BUNNY.

Will write from Crimea.

YALTA, CRIMEA

4th June 1938

[*On a Postcard.*]

This is Jill sitting on the beach with Sonia. She is very pleased, we have told her she is to have a baby brother or sister in the new year. It's been a perfect holiday, Kira is fit and I'm very brown. Yalta is like the Italian Riviera but much more beautiful. High mountains to the north protect it from all cold winds, cliffs tumble down to the sea's edge and pebble beach. Warm blue sea to bathe in and pine-trees above for shade.

Love from EGGU.



\* [The Nazis marched into Austria during the night of the 11th of March, without warning. Most people of Continental nationalities left at once. But some English people remained to ski. They refused to "panic" at this show of Nazi force.]

† [The forthrightness of this letter kept Eddie's sister in England. If Eddie, who had so longed for her sister's coming, now arranged to be in the Crimea for May and early June, the very dates arranged for the visit, it was proof that the visit was earnestly vetoed.]

[A postcard will pass the censor when a letter will not. There was no longer any question of putting off Eddie's second baby in the hope of her sister's visit. This card was even more final than the letter, in its acceptance of approaching war.]

In the month of August Eddie's sister took her two small boys, Anthony and the Seagull, for a holiday to Harlech, in North Wales. In the morning sunshine, looking across the blue of Cardigan Bay to where Criccieth shone like a cluster of sea-pearls in the mountain belt of green and coral, she thought that Crimea itself could have nothing more to offer. The boys got brown. Perhaps they were as brown as Jill. It was so peaceful that August, no one in Wales spoke of war. The Russians were so excitable, perhaps Eddie had caught the habit. The Welsh mountains were calm, inscrutable, and the sun went down on a sea as smooth, and softly grey, as a bowl of Copenhagen china.

September came and the voice of Dr Beneš was heard on the Czech Broadcasting System: "I firmly believe that nothing other than moral force, goodwill, and mutual trust . . . should we in peace solve our nation's affairs . . . our country will be one of the most beautiful, best administered . . . worthiest and most equitable in the world."

The voice of Goering answered: "A petty segment of

Europe is harassing human beings. . . . This miserable pygmy race of Czechs, without culture, is oppressing a cultured people, and behind it is Moscow and the eternal mask of the Jew devil."

Chamberlain flew to Berchtesgaden. He flew a second time, to Godesberg.

Eddie's sister had not written from Harlech. She wrote now from Yorkshire, desperate at the space between them that war would fill, in every field and town, with torn bodies, aching hearts and the pain of parting. She had never gone to Eddie and now she could not go.

On the 29th of September Chamberlain and Daladier flew to Munich. France and England accepted Germany's demands. No representative of the U.S.S.R. had been invited to the Conference. In this atmosphere Eddie wrote what she expected to be her final letter.]

## I 24

KHARKOV

*29th September 1938*

Dearest,

Thanks for your hectic letter yesterday. I guess it's too late to do anything about anything now, and although I wanted to do as you suggest for ages, kept putting it off.

I'm only writing to you and you'd better write to G. and B. and with the use of my signature transfer anything in my name to yours. It's no use to me, and to be honest, I'm not interested. Kira and I are quite alright and I think you'll have to talk to Mother, because I hate thinking about wills, when I hope she'll go on living for years, and in any case I'm not likely to be able to make use of anything Mother might leave me. So—

1. Close my account and transfer to yourself.
2. Transfer E.'s shares to yourself.
3. Whatever it is G. has arranged for me, transfer also to yourself.

Here are three or four sheets of blank paper with signatures at the bottom. You'll have to excuse the paper and for heaven's sake don't start a lot of business correspondence through the bank or E. or G. I shan't answer. Take the lot and thank you very much. If ever we come and stay with you I expect you won't let us starve.

Love to you all, and if there's war don't expect letters, I shan't be writing.

BUNNY.

## I 25

KHARKOV 24  
17th October 1938

Dearest,

Thanks for your letter and cards and hectic writings. We weren't feeling a bit hectic, astonished at lots of things and people, but not in the least panicky and you shouldn't believe everything you read in the papers.

I say, I forgot to say we got one or two more books—*Far Enough* and the *Scott Expedition*.

Here's a new story for you. A man having sent his wife to the sea for a rest, alone, disclosed to his friend his anxiety about his wife's faithfulness, or faithlessness as you like. The friend advised him to toss and if the coin came down tails then she had been faithless once, if heads, then many times. Says the first man, Yes, but if she has been faithful to me, what then? Ah, then the coin will be suspended in air.

How are the children? Jill and I are full of cold, myself to the extent that I can't even think, a regular snorter, eyes streaming and the rest, I feel only a Dorothy Sayers could cure me or at least make me forget the fugginess of a head cold for a bit. Sorry to be dull, but I don't seem to have an idea in my head except that of getting to bed.

Love to you all, BUNNY.

*31st October 1938*

Like Mother's letter, yours has been lying here unposted a fortnight. My cold's gone but I'm just lazy and lie up a lot these days.

Will write again soon.

PS. If it's a boy he will be Patrick, a British name and Kira likes it, and most important of all, Russians can pronounce it as well as they can pronounce Jill. That's such an English name but the J in Jill is a Russian sound. We compromise well, Kira and I, don't you think?

BUNNY.

## 126

KHARKOV

*10th March 1939*

Dearest,

Yes, Patrick was born quicker than your seagull. He made a record even for the clinic in Kharkov. Kira just got me there, and the doctor arrived after Patrick did. So our stories are still alike. Don't expect many letters, shan't have much time to write, two children plus Sonia to battle with.

Kira is very proud of his sin, . . . Russian for son!

Love, EGGU.

[On the 14th of March Hitler entered Prague and Czechoslovakia was his. On the 22nd of March he annexed Memel. On the 31st of March Mr Chamberlain announced that Britain would go to the support of Poland when her independence was menaced. Mr Lloyd George at once asked the Government to "Take immediate steps to secure the adhesion of Russia . . . without the help of Russia," he said, "we are walking into a trap."

But negotiations for a pact between the U.S.S.R., France and Great Britain were unsuccessful. War came nearer. But the U.S.S.R. had taken those steps best calculated to ensure their own protection. In 1937 they had begun a purge of Red Army officers accused of treason and fifth-column activities. By this means they avoided in advance the fate that was to befall France. Meanwhile they took cover behind negotiations for an Economic Treaty with Germany.

On the 23rd of August the Soviet German Pact was signed. It had the same motive as the British pact with Germany at Munich—viz. to give longer time to prepare for war against the Nazis. But at the time England could not read it that way, for on Sunday, the 3rd of September, Britain was at war with Germany.

So Eddie belonged to a country that seemed to have ranged itself with Britain's enemy. Just as once it had been kinder to Eddie not to go to Russia, now it was kinder not even to write to her in Russia. Eddie would feel the same about writing to England.

There was silence.]

*9th January 1940*

Greetings and love. Have written to Hans in Danzig. We are all well having "danced in" the New Year.

Keep well and don't forget us.

As ever, EDDIE.

[Letter 127 was on a picture postcard, dated 9th January 1940, and stamped "Passed by Censor," it reached England on the 12th of February. It took one month to come instead of the pre-war time of one week. For the first time since Eddie went to Russia it is addressed in Russian characters.]

[The war went on, and except for the blackout it seemed not to affect England. The fight was hard enough at sea, but on land it was a "phoney" war. Then, suddenly, Norway was invaded; Holland, Belgium, Denmark; it was war in earnest.

France fell. Britain fought on alone. Hitler raged and announced that he would address Londoners from the balcony of Buckingham Palace on the 15th of September. But he lost the Battle of Britain and all he could do was to bomb and bomb and bomb. Even the little Yorkshire village where Eddie's sister lived was not neglected. One morning John pulled Eddie's sister down beneath a window when machine-gun bullets rattled on the roof. But it was quickly over, and when the siren went again that morning and John went out towards the stables he found his carter taking a horse and cart towards the fields. "Unfasten your horse, man," he said. "Eh, Mr John," said his carter, "I've three loads o' muck to put on field afore twelve, I can't stop for Hitler," and went on.

John's wife congratulated herself that Eddie was so far removed from it all in Russia.

1940 became 1941 and Hitler, baffled by the small island off the coast of Europe, turned from it to attack the largest state in the world.

One lovely Sunday morning John went into the chintz drawing-room: "My dear, you'll soon hear from Eddie now." "Why?" "Hitler invaded Russia at four o'clock this morning."

That evening, it was the 22nd of June, 1941, Mr Churchill's voice was broadcast round the world. "Without declaration of war, without even an ultimatum, the German bombs rained down from the sky upon the Russian cities, German troops violated the Russian frontiers, and an hour later the German ambassador, who during the night before was lavishing his assurances of friendship, almost of alliance, upon the Russians, called upon the Russian Foreign Minister to tell him that a state of war existed between Germany and Russia. . . . The Russian danger is therefore our danger, just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the cause of free man and free peoples in every quarter of the globe."

Eddie did not seem to be in any immediate danger, for Kharkov was quite six hundred miles from the old Russian frontier. After a month had gone by, her sister began to expect a letter. There was no reason against writing now that the two countries were Allies. But no news came, and the Germans were advancing.

On the 17th of October Odessa was evacuated. The same day it was announced that in recent weeks skilled workers in munitions had been withdrawn from Moscow, Ukraine, and other industrial centres to new mines and factories in the Urals and Asiatic Russia.

Two days later Kharkov was in the news. The Russian High Command announced that the German thrust towards

Kharkov made no progress against Marshal Budenny's troops, and in the Crimea troops on Perekop Peninsula had been reinforced by those troops evacuated from Crimea. Kharkov still might be safe.

The order of the day issued by Stalin on the 19th of October was that Moscow was to be defended to the last.

The Russians were fighting hard. They made no moan about air raids on towns, but, with the known Nazi technique of heavy bombing to obliterate part of a town before their troops attacked it, what was happening to Kharkov?

On the 28th of October Eddie's sister knew. The wireless announced "Fierce fighting in the suburbs of Kharkov, where, Tass Agency reports, the Germans lost 3500 killed in one day alone."

On Christmas Eve the Red Cross Society reported that they regretted they had been unable to discover any news of Eddie.

In February, 1942, it was announced in England that Professor Kapitza was safe in Ufa, and as Chief Advisor to the Soviet Government on Science in the U.S.S.R. was busy re-organising the Physico-Technical Institutes in Kazakstan, in Chelyabrinsk, in Sverdlovsk, in the Urals, in the Altai Mountains and in the Far East. A lot of machinery had been saved and moved to these Institutes, whose establishment had first been planned in 1932. All the Institute equipment had left Kharkov in one night. Such a colossal undertaking had been made easier by the fact that the track of Russian railways is much wider than in England and so can take loads of vast dimensions. Also by the fact that across the thousand miles of flat steppe there are no tunnels and very few bridges to be negotiated. The rivers are very far apart. But, whatever advantages the Russian railways had, it was a feat to be marvelled at. The news was received with joy in one home in England.

At last it seemed possible to get news of Eddie. Professor



Kapitza would know the new destination of all the scientists, particularly where his intimate friends were living. Eddie's sister wired at once to him. She got no reply.

On the 27th of April, on the Moscow radio, Molotov charged the German Government with a premeditated policy of atrocities in Russia, planned in detail by the German High Command. It included slave labour and serfdom for workers and peasants under German occupation, enforced transport of Soviet civilians from both town and country to Germany and their treatment as prisoners of war.

The tide of battle surged again round Kharkov, for, during May, it appeared that Marshal Timoshenko's tactics aimed at enveloping Kharkov, rather than taking by direct attack a city now strongly fortified by the Germans. Von Boch's counterattack on the Kharkov front was smashed and Soviet troops on the 21st of May pushed forward through the German lines to a depth of forty miles. But, after eight months' fighting, Kharkov still remained in the invader's hands.

During May the Anglo-Soviet Pact was signed. To Eddie's sister it seemed as though Eddie had been given back to her.

One afternoon in June, Anthony and the Seagull pushed abreast into the drawing-room. They carried a letter. "Mummy, the postman's brought you a letter from Russia," said the Seagull.

"Can I have the stamp?" said Anthony.

Eddie's sister opened the letter to find it had been three months coming.]

KZIL-ORDA

KAZAKSTAN

*27th January 1942*

Darling,

At long last what! As you will see, we no longer live in Kharkov. The loss of home and possessions is not so bitter when I can tell you that the children are well and beginning to forget the days before the evacuation. Kira's nerves are not in a very good state but I suppose it is the reaction. He still manages to lecture and work in the laboratory. We may later go to Alma-Ata, so please write to us c/o The Academy of Science of the Ukraine, Ufa, U.S.S.R.

They will forward it to any address we may have.

Give my love to John and everybody. Jill and Pat, who long to meet their Aunt, send you a big hug. With dearest love from Kira and your own

EDDIE.

PS. You seem so very far away.

[Eddie was very far away. The republic of Kazakstan stretched for eighteen hundred miles across Asia. Though its western border lies only a hundred miles east from Stalingrad, its eastern border forms the frontier with Northwest China. Kzil-Orda is not marked on the average English Atlas, so Eddie's sister had no idea where Eddie might be, and no more news came. She telegraphed the Kapitzas and had no reply even from them.

The Germans reached Stalingrad and the countryside around. Wherever they advanced they took women and children into slavery in Germany. Ilya Ehrenberg broadcasting from Moscow said that six million people had been taken as slaves from Russia by the accursed Germans. It was known in England that very large numbers had been sent into Ger-

many from Kharkov. General Smuts visiting London said that Russia was bearing more than her share of the common burden.

Summer turned to winter and as the first frost gripped the Yorkshire village where Eddie's sister lived, there were many willing helpers for Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund. Everywhere English people pictured Russian families tramping eastward through the snow to escape the Germans. In the Russian gift shop of that Yorkshire village the issue became a personal one. Where was Eddie? It was a strange coincidence that the day the gift shop closed a telegram came from Russia.]

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*[Telegram, from the wife of Professor Kapitzza. Handed in 14 hours 11th November 1942 Kazan, U.S.S.R. Received 8.45 hours 12th November 1942 Yorkshire, England.]*

EDDIE AND FAMILY ALL WELL AT ALMA ATA. LOVE.

ANIA KAPITZA.

[Early in the year (1943), Eddie's mother heard from Alma Ata. Kira and his family were living on the fifth floor of a block of flats in Alma Ata. They were in one of the splendid new towns which the Soviet Government had built in their Eastern territory. The flats were modern in every respect, down to the provision of fire escapes . . . the town, beautifully planned, included the Scientific Institute and hospital.

Eddie and Kira had lost everything. They had just managed to bring two small cases containing a few clothes,

so clothing would soon be a problem except, of course, it wouldn't matter much in the summer in the tropical sunshine. Kira's health suffered as a result of what they had gone through before leaving Kharkov. But he was working harder than ever. Soon now the war would be over.

*Extract from the Daily Telegraph.*

## THE RUSSIAN ARMY IS IN KHARKOV

Tuesday, February 16, 1943: "The last phase of the battle for this, the greatest industrial centre of the Ukraine, began early this morning when General Vatutin's armoured divisions smashed the ring of German defences north and east of Kharkov and drove two wedges into the suburbs. Fighting raged all day in blazing streets where German tanks and crack Waffen SS Troops offered a desperate resistance."

*B.B.C. News Bulletin.*

Sunday, March 14, 1943: "The Germans have recaptured Kharkov."

Eddie's sister heard the bad news on the wireless just as the sirens sounded. That night heavy raids on the northeast coast of England kept her and the children awake most of the night. As she manned the stirrup pump Eddie's sister felt glad that Eddie was so far away in Russia with her children. Two thousand miles from the battle front, Eddie, together with the "Back Room Boys" of Russia, was out of reach of air raids, and would be till the war was over.]

[*Telegram.*]

ALMA ATA

1943

PATRICK KILLED IN AN ACCIDENT. WRITING.

EDDIE.

[Eddie wrote to her mother from Alma Ata an account of Patrick's death. . . . Patrick was playing . . . he escaped notice for a few moments . . . climbed to a dangerous place, slipped and fell from a height. It was Eddie who raced to him and picked him up. She took him in the car to hospital but he was dead. She thought Kira would never recover from the shock. It was a struggle to prepare and deliver his lectures, but he kept on working. She asked for some books to distract him, and to send scientific journals as before. Jill was well and longed to know her grandmother. They sent love.

*Extracts from the Daily Telegraph.*

Friday, August 6, 1943: "At midnight, for the first time in Russian history, 120 guns fired salvoes in Moscow to celebrate the double victory of Orel and Byelgorod. . . ."

Tuesday, August 10, 1943: "The Russians are advancing rapidly on Kharkov and Bryansk. . . ."

*B.B.C. News Bulletin.*

Monday, August 23, 1943: "An order of the day by Marshal Stalin announced this evening the capture of Kharkov, gateway to the Ukraine, after fierce street fighting."

Saturday, October 9, 1943: "The Russian High Command announce to-day the Caucasus is now entirely cleared of the enemy."]

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MOSCOW

*December 1943*

[*Extract from letter to Eddie's mother.*]

. . . We are staying with Luba and Marina. . . . Jill is in positive danger of being utterly spoilt. Her aunts and uncles overload her with presents. A lovely gay little Cossack hat and boots, and materials for frocks, toys, books.

Kira has been on an official visit to Kharkov and the Institute. He says in places you might think the streets had not been destroyed. The outline is the same, but when you walk down a street you find it is only the shell of the buildings that remain.

Kira went to the Institute buildings. . . . He found an absolutely empty and dirty flat. Our beautiful Steinway lying on the road near the garage having been used by the Germans as a platform for washing lorries. . . . We shall have to begin again from the beginning.

How is Uncle George? and has he got evacuees? I long to see you.

EDDIE.

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*Near MOSCOW*

*4th January 1944*

Mariana!

You can't imagine what joy your letter brought to me. You've probably forgotten you wrote it. Jan. 25th last!! I can only say the Post Office "works in a most wondrous way." Anyhow, even if it takes a year to get a letter in your own scrawl as cheerful and normal as ever, it made the world a

little rosier. Perhaps when you get this the war will be over and in spite of Patrick's death, we shall find renewed energy to begin life all over again. Kira was in Kharkov not long ago. Our flat still stands, but absolutely empty. On an official visit to the various occupied flats of the Institute as to repairs, etc., Kira found, ranged among the ikons, a charcoal portrait which Ania Kapitza did of me in 1930-31. The people (not Institute people) were very astonished when Kira claimed it was his wife! He also found Van Gogh's "Cypresses," and the questionable "Tower of Blue Horses"—Joy! we have three pictures to begin our house-holding on—we shall be taking to the ways of Kazakstan and living on the floor!

I was sorry to hear that John was so ill, but one hopes by the time you get this you will have forgotten that he was ever ill at all! It's nice to hear of Anthony and Morrice enjoying Charlie Chaplin. Gillian's knowledge of him is limited to *Lights of the Big City* and *New Times* (if that's the right translation). Last summer I got unlimited pleasure from *Lady Hamilton*—but mostly I think due to home sickness—"Londonderry Air" and "Hearts of Oak" being almost too much emotionally!!

As soon as the war is over you must come and see us. The Germans have made an awful mess of this country. In Kharkov for instance, Kira says the outlines have remained so that if you look *along* a street (not all, of course) it seems the same—but if you look at each house as you pass it is difficult to find a single house of 2 or 3 stories which isn't gutted.

Our present abode is in rather nice surroundings and I begin to appreciate the beauty of the real Russian winter—not in town—but communication with Moscow is not all that could be desired—but we get pleasure from visits to Marina and the Kapitza's. Garry is now an Academician and has grown a beard! We can't decide whether it was originally due to lack of razor blades or mufflers. Anyhow he looks very amusing and friendly with it and on New Year's Eve I measured it and

discovered the said beard to have the drastic length of twelve centimetres!! Jill and Garry are great friends.

Gee! Isn't the news from the front splendid? Every day fireworks—and such jolly ones. Bang! Bang!! and up into the air, over Moscow sail hundreds of brightly coloured balls—like so many bouquets of flowers thrown on high.

My love to you all. It's a pity the children can't meet now—it would be much more exciting than when they get to the important age. Two to five is for me the best age—I'm sorry Jill grows so quickly, she'll soon be nine and learning tables by the dozen!

As ever, EDDIE.

P.S. I wrote a much longer letter than this, but it got drowned in a bottle of vodka which Kira broke in his dispatch case by falling!

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MOSCOW

15th February 1944

Darling Bambino,

It looks as though we're going to live in Kharkov again. As I wired you today, Kira has been appointed Director of the old Institute and it certainly is time somebody took things in hand after re-evacuation. I'm not *very* enthusiastic about Kira being Director—with his health in such a state I'm not sure that it won't be too much of a strain. Things are difficult and everybody is "nervous" to put it politely. On the other hand I'm tired of travelling and it seems a terrible shame that an Institute like ours should just dissolve into thin air.

You might write to me and risk the old Kharkov address



and write via Kapitza also, in case the Kharkov letter gets lost. Kira will have to do a lot of travelling between Moscow, Kharkov, and Kiev, but when the war is over I hope things will be easier.

I don't think we shall be living in our old flat. It has no fireplace any longer and there are too many associations. I hope the war ends soon because I'm relying on you to bring us all some clothes. The few we have left won't last another year's ceaseless wear!

Kira is at present in Kharkov for ten days, and we are staying in Moscow with Marina. Jillikin's aunts utterly ruin her. She has had so many presents since we arrived here that her head is quite turned.

I hope we shall be able to get to our old home in April so that it won't be too late to begin gardening.

How is Mother? We so often think of you all and I worry that Mother is so much alone. How is John? and the boys?

I shall be glad when you can send me something to read again. Kira and I regret our little library more than we can say. The Germans took all Kira's English and Russian scientific books to Munich.

Give my love to everyone, Uncle G, Uncle J, and Aunt Alice. I wonder if ——— still lives at Jordan's Yard, Cambridge. Could you write? I think Edwina is completely lost.

A big hug from Gillian and me.

As ever, BUNNY.

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KHARKOV

9th November 1944

Dearest,

We are awful pleased each time we get a telegram from you and the last time amused into the bargain.

You don't really suppose that in war time I can go rushing round trying to find people with surnames of that ilk—and if I *could* in this case I *wouldn't*!

We got a letter from our scientist friend R. not long ago saying he had heard about us from you. How *did* you fish him out? But then you always were full of energy.

I wonder what you are like and what you are doing in war-time. What are your views on pacifism?—I never had any but if I had, the present day Kharkov would completely wipe 'em out.

How are John and the children. Do they both go to school now? Jilly is in the second class and learns her lessons, if not brilliantly as becomes her father's daughter—better than her Mama did!!!

To-day we got her first report—it's satisfactory of course but not the all round 5 that most of the other children seem to have got, but as most of the mothers and fathers tremble over their children and their lessons perhaps that's the reason. Kira and I believe in Gillian doing the lessons *herself*. If it's a bit dirtier, we at least hope that something remains in her head and not the one idea "tidiness," 'tho that must also come into account later. Heavens! it's difficult sometimes to know how to act and re-act and nine to ten is an age I haven't much sympathy for—but I try to be just—and as gentle as possible.

I expect you're much better with your children than I. How does John manage as father? Can't imagine him somehow—but then—Kira also didn't seem a *possible* father—and actually he's better than most—a little strict or a little lenient but taking him all round a very profitable parent and full of knowledge—always got an answer for questions—which I confess I haven't, and patience—in spite of a rotten nervous system—at which I marvel.

Jillikins adores Kira and his slightest word means more than a hundred of mine—but on the other hand I can play and run

and tease—and laugh more than papa—and I am simply “Mamma” whom she hates to be without.

Kira got a whole bundle of journals from America to-day—there was the return address to:

Staten Island, N.Y.

Will that be John’s brother? I have a faint idea that you once told me there was such a person, but it’s all so long ago and my memory is so vague.

Do you do much reading? I long to—but just now have to be satisfied with re-reading some of the books I *found* in various odd places of the Institute when we returned home. Most of the books you sent these last ten years are gone of course—and *all* the *Homes and Gardens*, but thirty or forty books are on my shelves again.

How are you off for clothes and food—is it a “problem” or do you just go on as usual? It’s rather the former with us—thanks to evacuation—one couldn’t take everything—in fact one was glad to be able to take necessities, and clothes with Jill and me are a sore point.

Food rations we get regularly—and if not *all* one could desire at least far from hunger. Do write me a newsy letter—heaven knows when it will arrive but to us all news is interesting.

How are the relations? Expect you rarely see them now—travel, even in England, can’t be so simple. How’s Uncle G——? Does anyone ever hear from Hans’ wife? If she is still alive and in Germany she must be tasting a little of what we have gone thro’. Some of her children must be almost grown up—strange thought!

Is Ida still with Uncle G——? and Uncle Jack?

Jillikin seems to think (as a result of *Alice in Wonderland*) that Alice is a marvellous name—she pronounces it “Aleesia” which is rather attractive of course.

What happened to Lucie?—did she evacuate from London?

Have you still got "evacuees" even if they are your friends? In fact, write me a screed, about Mother and yourselves and everything.

My love to all and many thanks for your help—you can't imagine how much the literature means to Kira—rejuvenation almost.

Much love,

As ever, BUNNY.

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KHARKOV 24

B.B.K. Kb. 7

20th May 1945

Dearest,

I was awfully pleased to get Mother's letter which you forwarded; why don't *you* write? I'm getting up a fine appetite for one of your long and juicy letters—at least twenty pages!! So just get down to it.

In June there's a Jubilee Session of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. I understand lots of people are coming—Dirac, Blackett, Cockroft, and so on. It will be nice if I can see them again. But you understand that travel isn't very simple and I'm not sure about getting to Moscow. But Marina and Garry send endless invitations! Jilly is going with Kira . . . and I will stay with Marina for a month or two. Why on earth isn't your disapproving (of me!) husband a scientist. We should be able to see one another much oftener! and when is he going to let you come and see us? Everything is being prepared so if you want to see what the Germans really did to Russia . . . get a move on!

Pity you're not Mrs Churchill's secretary isn't it? Mrs Churchill must have had a nice heavy holiday what? but she

seemed pleased with her reception. Kira thinks no end of "Winny."

The bloke your acquaintance enquired about, or non-acquaintance as the case may be, is living in the far north. But I shan't answer any more silly questions.

Gillian has just finished school for the summer—until Sept. 1st. How are Anthony and Morrice? and what has John been doing all this time? Have you still got evacuees? or have they returned? How's Elizabeth? Has her sun-room got its glass intact? and what are you all dressed in? We haven't got to the raggy stage yet, but no doubt soon! The spring has been very late and cold, but I've finished planting and am now spending the evenings watering the tomatoes, etc. Had a letter from Edwina at last—something like six or seven years— My love to you all—write immediately and come soon and if there's the possibility of a parcel we shall jump with glee! We are awfully glad to get the scientific journals and things. If you send books (for me) register them or they will be lost in the post.

Much love to you all,

As ever, BUNNY.

[Cockroft . . . Blackett . . . Dirac . . . Kapitza . . . Yoffey. . . . Less than three months after Eddie wrote hoping that she was soon going to meet the three English scientists in Moscow, the names of her scientist friends were blazoned across the front pages of all the newspapers in England. Cockroft was one of the original team of six British scientists who set out to research on the atomic bomb in 1940, under the chairmanship of Sir George Paget Thomson. As the idea developed the group was expanded to use the ideas of everyone who could contribute. Professor Dirac of Cambridge and Professor Blackett of Manchester were among the famous names whose work for a moment terrified the world. The genie was out of the bottle and no one could put him back. That the war was over and won for a certainty now, seemed hardly to matter against

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the new possibilities of destruction. The man in the street wanted only one thing now, to ensure friendship for ever between Russia, America, and Britain. Meanwhile, people waited on the newspapers from one edition to the next and read for example as in the *Daily Mail* August 7, 1945:

MOST TERRIFYING WEAPON IN HISTORY  
CHURCHILL'S WARNING. ATOMIC BOMB  
JAPS GIVEN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS TO  
SURRENDER .

President Truman issued a statement from the White House: "Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, an important Japanese army base. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T. It had more than 2,000 times the blast power of the British 'Grand Slam' (ten tonner), the largest bomb yet used in the history of warfare."

At the same time that President Truman issued his statement from the White House, Mr Attlee issued a statement from No. 10 Downing Street. It had been prepared by Mr Churchill while he was still in office. It gave the history of the research on the atomic bomb and said, "By the year 1939 it had become widely recognised among scientists of many nations that the release of energy by atomic fission was a possibility. . . . the Government thought it right that research should be carried on. . . . At this stage the research was mainly carried out in our Universities, principally Oxford, Cambridge, London (Imperial College), Liverpool and Birmingham."

To Eddie's sister, the Downing Street statement vividly recalled the days when Rutherford had Kapitza and Kira working at the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge. Lord Rutherford was the first man in the world to split the atom. To the British lay mind it seemed natural that the newspapers should

immediately publish articles of all kinds on the late Lord Rutherford. But instead on that fateful day, August 7th, the English papers carried a special article on Professor Peter Kapitza!

The *Daily Mail* and the *Evening Standard* both began their articles with the same introduction . . .

"Britain was on the trail of the atomic bomb ten years ago; leading in the research over here was Professor Peter Kapitza, Russian-born physicist."

The *Evening Standard* went on to say:

"We knew that U.S. scientists were carrying on parallel investigations, so that it was not hard to merge the two forces. . . . We also knew that Germany was working on the same lines. . . . But we won the race.

"The use of atomic energy is simple in theory. It was putting the theory into practice that was hard.

"Professor Kapitza produced magnetic fields five times as powerful as anybody else. A new laboratory was built for him at Cambridge, with a grant of £15,000 from the Royal Society. Professor Kapitza continued his research. Then he went to Russia to attend a convention. He is still there. Moscow explained that they needed him. Kapitza's laboratory was shipped to Moscow some years later.

"Under the urge of war, scientific progress increased. In the United States, British scientists were able to take advantage of the huge atom-smashing machines built at various American universities."

When Eddie first went to Russia she had been very much in awe of the great Professor Yoffey. He had received her kindly when Kira took her as a bride to visit him in his home in Leningrad. In February, 1945, *Picture Post* published his photograph with the statement that he was famous for his researches in the field of electronic semi-conductors and that he built a cyclotron to smash the uranium atom.

Kira himself, when he smashed the atom of lithium, was following the lines laid down by Van de Graaff who worked

on disintegration or high voltage at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Though he was a student of Lord Rutherford at Cambridge, it was not at Cambridge that he worked on the disintegration of the atom. He worked quite independently at Kharkov. He and Eddie were delighted when the American Van de Graaff visited them at their Kharkov flat in 1935.

So whether Eddie's friends were English, Russian, or American, they all played their part in the preparation of the Atomic Age. They worked in friendship, and lived in friendship. Their countrymen passionately desire to work and live likewise.]

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[*Telegram.*]

KHARKOV

*November 1945*

WILL WRITE BY AIR MAIL IN FUTURE. LOVE.

EDDIE.









